

R

ROBIN HOOD,

AND

POEMS.

ONE SHILLING.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

ROBIN HOOD

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN R. WISE.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

By the same Author,

JOHN BULL,

A COMEDY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Paper covers, One Shilling.

“A comedy of true Aristophanic texture, full of aptitude and shrewdness; it lashes in a light and lively manner the follies of the day.”—THE DISPATCH.

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“**THEY** say he is already in the forest, and a many merry men with him ; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England, and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world.”—SHAKESPEARE ; AS YOU LIKE IT, Act I. Scene 1.

“Such was Robin Hood ; a man who in a barbarous age, and under a complicated tyranny, displayed a spirit of freedom and independence which has endeared him to the common people, whose cause he maintained—for all opposition to tyranny is the cause of the people.”—RITSON.

P R E F A C E.

I TRUST that my Play of "Robin Hood," will not be unacceptable to the Public, when they are told, that a portion of the plot, and the words of two scenes, are taken from an older drama on the same subject, by Anthony Munday. If I be put on my trial for plagiarism, my defence is, that this was the plan of one who is worthy of all imitation—William Shakespeare. He well knew the value of such 'vantage ground; and, as Waldo Emerson remarks, "in common with his comrades, esteemed the mass of old plays, waste stock, on which any experiment could be freely tried. Had the prestige which hedges about modern tragedy existed, nothing could have been done."

Nowadays the statuary repairs (?) antiques, and no one imagines that injustice is done to the old Greek sculptor,—modern innovation stalks ruthlessly amongst the fragments of the Parthenon, yet only here and there, a protesting voice is heard; but the student of poesy is not allowed the liberty of his brother artist, he may not add to or take away from the old stock, for critics are Protectionists, and "*noli me tangere*" is the motto they have supplied to each departed author.

If I have done good Anthony wrong, he will at least forgive me, for it was a kind, liberal, and forgiving spirit, I can swear, that dictated his Robin Hood. He loved

Robin even as I do, for he is the same large-hearted man to both of us; he loved Maid Marian as I, for she is the same kind, good, gentle woman to both; he loved Little John, the boldest

“Of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can,
Some old hunting ditty;”

he loved the dappled deer under “the shade of melancholy boughs;” he loved the “grenè shaw” of Sherwood even as I,—why then should he be angry with me, who have but taken from his large stock to eke out my little hoard? He hated tyranny even as I; he hated that spirit which would in these days take away forest, and common, and heath from the poor man, yea, even God’s fresh air; he hated the petty narrow-mindedness in which the forest laws and the modern game laws are conceived,—why then should he be angry with me, who have not stolen the colours he hoisted, but merely enlisted under them?

I should not have dwelt upon this matter were I not convinced of the wrong direction the Modern Drama is taking, and hope in some degree to remedy it by fixing attention on our older dramatists. Whatever were their faults, their English was pure and nervous, their imagery correct because drawn from Nature, their wit, rough perhaps, but healthy; and it is upon them, and upon them only, we must graft our cuttings: and such a cutting is mine—the thorns upon it are many, the buds indeed few, but I hope (for this is but an immature sketch) that the latter may some day open out and bloom.

Characters.

KING RICHARD THE FIRST.

PRINCE JOHN.

ROBERT, EARL OF HUNTINGDON—afterwards ROBIN HOOD.

LITTLE JOHN.

WILL SCARLET.

ARTHUR-A-BLAND.

FRIAR TUCK.

MUCH (*the Miller's Son*)—The Clown.

ROBERT, EARL OF LEICESTER.

RICHMOND.

SALISBURY.

CHESTER.

SENTLOE.

FITZWATER (*Father to the Lady Marian.*)

LACY.

SIR HUGH LACY.

SIR GILBERT BROUGHTON.

LONGCHAMP, BISHOP OF ELY.

BISHOP OF HEREFORD.

PRIOR OF YORK (*Uncle to Huntingdon*)

WARMAN (*Steward to Huntingdon*)

RALPH.

JAILOR OF NOTTINGHAM.

SHERIFF.

PALMER.

Monks, Foresters, Soldiers, &c. &c.

QUEEN ELINOR.

THE LADY MARIAN.

FLORENCE (*Maid to Marian*)

SCENE—Chiefly in Sherwood Forest.

ROBIN HOOD.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Exterior of the Earl of Huntingdon's Castle.*

The PRIOR OF YORK and WARMAN discovered.

PRIOR. The Earl should have appeared as the disinherited knight, had I had my way; and marked you not that minx the Lady Marian, whose father hides the head of his poverty under a cap of maintenance? I heard her before the tournament began saying,—

Oh! though each lance were but a straw,
Each sword a feather from a lady's fan,
Each charger but a pyxie's steed,
And though the ground as soft as bed of down,
Yet would I dread feathers, and straws, and pyxie's steed,
Lest they should do the Earl some harm!

WARMAN. And marked you not the speech he made when he gave her the crown? were not other maidens as fair as she to have been Queen of Beauty? 'Tis not all right there.

PRIOR. If he marries her, Warman, he does it at his peril—there shall not have been such a marriage feast since the Centaurs and Lapithæ fought.

Enter a BEGGAR.

BEGGAR. Sirs, I pray you to give an old man alms!

PRIOR. Send him away—we can't give alms to every beggar.

Exit PRIOR.

BEGGAR. Sir, I do beseech you to cast your bread upon

my stream of tears, and He who sends the rain of heaven shall give it you back with interest.

WARMAN. I care not for such security ; be off !

Enter the EARL OF HUNTINGDON unnoticed.

BEGGAR. Give me but a mouthful !

WARMAN. Take these—take petrified bread ! (*takes up stones*)

HUNT. (*approaching*) Warman, you know not what you do ! when you Abuse this man, you do abuse your God. Think rather this, that 'tis some angel in Disguise, sent here to try you, who some day (Which God forefend !) when sickness comes to you May comfort you, and say you acted thus And thus to me, and you this deed forgot Shall wonder how and when you did it.

Enter the LADY MARIAN, who does not see Huntingdon and Warman.

MARIAN. I marked you from my room, poor man, And have brought down these scraps of food And clothing, for you shiver with the cold.

HUNT. O fair, fair sight, to see a good deed done ! I would I were that beggar man ! Look how she speaks and comforts him ! How poor is gold compared with kindly words !

MARIAN. (*who now observes him*) I did not know that you were standing by.

HUNT. Oh Marian ! if e'er I loved you for Your beauty's sake, or eyes like ash-buds black, That love is change to adoration, Which shall hourly progress as long as I Have power to reckon up good deeds ! If you Had given me untold riches, bestowed on me Lands reckoned up by miles, 'twould all have been A poor bequest, compared with these few rags. You have enriched yourself, and him, and me, But have made Warman poor ; and when cold days Shall come, these clothes shall warm my heart as well

As this man's limbs, nay, more ; and these few scraps
Shall be to me a feast throughout all life :
Woman is charity's best and fairest angel ;
And this by thee I swear, that she to heaven
Is most allied, when beauty kind deeds leaven.

MARIAN. Come along with us, poor man. and we'll see
to your wants.

Exeunt all but WARMAN.

WARMAN. He change places with a beggar ! yes, so he
shall, and we'll see then if the Lady Marian will care for
him. Love's not such a fool as he thinks—love feels cold
when others are only luke-warm—love has left a falling
house before the rats have seen the cracks—love has a good
nose, and hates the stink of poverty. Revenge I'll have
for this insult, which has let me into the full secret of his
love. The Prior of York holds a bond upon the Earl's
estates, and by virtue of it can outlaw him, and he has
sworn many a time that he will do it, if he thwart him in
the matter of marriage. Prince John too will be my friend,
for he wants to have the Lady Marian as his mistress—I'll
be off, therefore, on my mission.

Exit.

Re-enter PRIOR OF YORK and PRINCE JOHN.

PRINCE. Have I not reason then to hate the Earl, because
the rabble love him, and have some vile idea that he'll
avenge what they call their wrongs ? If he but smile they
notice it and treasure it up. And then I've heard him say,
“ God made us all equal, none were born slaves, that our
hands were for higher uses than to delve, or to spin, or to
carry arms with.” We must undo him or he'll undo us ;
and to this, he stands between me and Marian.

PRIOR. What said he in that affair Prince ?

PRINCE. I questioned him, as I told you I should.

PRIOR. When you urged her poverty ?

PRINCE. That love hath no such boundaries as these
Upon its map to show which lands have gold.

PRIOR. Let him marry her, and I'll dower him and his
wife with outlawry on their marriage morn.

PRINCE. You are in earnest ?

Re-enter WARMAN.

WARMAN. Since I last saw you I can on mine own authority declare that the Earl is to be married, and I thought it my duty to report the circumstance.

PRIOR. You did well Warman, and have earned my gratitude. I'll despatch a messenger to Ely, and forthwith have his outlawry drawn up. The King's shrieve will sup at this banquet: will that suit you, Prince?

PRINCE. We must secure the Lady Marian at the same time.

PRIOR. As to her, she'll be an easy prize when the Earl is taken. Come, we'll arrange matters; there shall be Lord Sentloe, Sir Hugh Lacy, Sir Gilbert Broughton, who all owe him a turn for his victory at the tournament. In the meantime we must keep silence, and you, Warman, must disguise your hand in the matter by a glove of feigned courtesy. We'll put things into execution.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*Hall in the Earl of Huntingdon's Castle.*

TWO POACHERS *and* MUCH *discovered.*

MUCH. And what's this crime you are brought here for?—poaching do they call it? It comes under the same clause as murder.

1st POACHER. We hope not.

MUCH. Hope not! why 'tis worse than murder. A man may be excused for killing another without a licence or so many acres; but to kill innocent deer!

2nd POACHER. We were compelled by hunger.

MUCH. Hunger can't grant five-pound licences.

Enter HUNTINGDON *and* WARMAN.

WARMAN. Here are these two men, my lord, who rob your forests.

MUCH. This man's tongue runs like a mill-clapper, and for much the same reason—water in the brain.

HUNT. I cannot find it in me to punish them; how often have I told you so, Warman!



WARMAN. My lord, you must punish them. You complain of extravagance; 'tis these who rob you, whilst you accuse others.

MUCH. (*to* WARMAN) Your head is as full of cobwebs as my father's mill, and your words as mealy.

HUNT. Hold! 'Tis true they kill a few poor deer, and these same deer do eat my acorns, and these same acorns are worth a few pence. What then? These men do but rob me of the value of my acorns, and shall I refuse to men what I grudge not hinds? Oh no! I wish 'twas only these poor men who robbed me. Let them go, and I'll find work for them. Oh! why is hunger such a crime?

Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*A Bower in the Earl's Garden.*

The LADY MARIAN *and* HUNTINGDON *discovered.*

MARIAN. To-morrow is our marriage morn. Oh, were The sun a clock, I'd push it on, so slow It moves.

HUNT. Come in beneath this bower
Of jessamine; such a flower-rooféd home
As this befits love's thoughts.
Here will we sit and talk until the sun
Doth set, and night, man's black slave, who brings
Him sleep, doth come. See, I'm not
The only one in love with you.
This envious rose, despairing to engage
Your gaze elsewhere, falls at your feet, spreading
Its crimson robe for you to tread upon;
And on your arm a wreath of brier has wound
Itself. Fie! you have lovers everywhere.

MARIAN. They do it but to whet your appetite,
Which needs no sharpening. Do not be jealous.
Sweet my love, this rose robs not my breast
Of any warmth, steals not a particle
Of love, which is all yours; but if you like,
Come, throw it down.

HUNT. Thanks, and many thanks,
Lovers are compact of jealousy. (*throws it down*)

MARIAN. What have you done?
Look at the poor rose lying on the ground,
Its fiery eye grown dim! I'll pick it up! (*picks it up*)
Look how it opes again! Did I not love,
I'd laugh at you, and tease you thus,
As how this poor insensate thing is my
Fine cavalier, in fine embroidery,
Well perfumed, to steal my love away!
Its stalks are his two legs, straddling apart,
Encased in bran new hose of Lincoln green,
And at the ends, peeling a bit of rind, I'd say,
What nice white woollen socks and boots to match!
And plucking then a thorn, its dagger from its
Side, I'd gently prick your arm, and say
That this red-coated fellow with his stiletto
Stabbed you. Mark me, you'd call him out forthwith,
And placing him some uncertain paces off,
(He having bowed and ducked like this to you,
As heroes do) would slish and slash at him.
He being destroyed, I'd lead you to a bush,
And say, Look, I've still more gallants there!
And when a breeze came by, I'd say, Look how
They tremble at your sight! cut them down!
Off with their heads! So would I fool you all
The year;—but I do love you far too well!

HUNT. Forgive me for this over-jealousy,
I will be glad, since flowers can love you so,
And in amends will weave you now a crown.

MARIAN. Reach down my favourite roses, my full-blown
ones,
Whose petals challenge the May-flies' horns
For beauty; pluck blue-bells and anemonies,
The wine cups of the trees; from overhead
Reach down the clustering honeysuckles,
On whose gold bugles Puck doth blow.

HUNTINGDON *crowns her.*

How warm and fresh they feel!

HUNT. So crowned was Proserpine
Amid the fields of Euna, e'er Pluto came.
Oh God, avert the omen of a thought!

But some ill-favoured stranger comes and sits
Upon the taper of my mind.

MARIAN. We have at last outlingered now the day,
And the new moon lies up in heaven,
A silver-lacèd thread, dropped down by one
Of Dian's handmaids. Look at the stars,
How silently they peep out one by one,
Like to a choir of golden birds with their
Eternal song

HUNT. Spirits invisible that do stuff the air,
Good angels, too, be with us both to-night,
And in that wizard land of sleep, let dreams
Like rivers from the same fountain drawn
Refresh us both! Sweet love, good night!

MARIAN. Again, God bless you, and good night!

Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—*A Room in the Earl's Castle.*

Enter HUNTINGDON as if he had hastily risen from the banquet, and LITTLE JOHN.

HUNT. Cut then this day out of the calendar,
Score 'gainst it with a piece of blackest coal!
Nay, burn it out—outlaw it from all days
Of happiness, for I am outlaw too!

LITTLE J. Patience, my lord, avails us more in trials
Than anger; though it be frail, it yet
Carries a heavy load with a light heart;
But anger, like a mettled steed, doth fret
And waste his own and rider's strength
Before the time, and superaddeth a weight
Of curses and of maledictions
Which are heavier than the burden.

HUNT. 'Tis as I oft have seen, when leaves are in
Their golden vestures clad, first comes the dull
And steady rain of flattery, and when
That's soaked them to a very pulp.
Come unkind frosts and wintry winds, to shake
Them, now grown useless, from their parent stem!
So have men rained on me, fawned, flattered me,

And now there comes this wintry frost.
I have heard it said that in a globe of dew,
A thousand animals do prey and feed
On their own kind ; so on this watery globe
We live and feed upon our friend's mishaps,
Press on the fallen, from the bankrupt squeeze
The last mite he has.

LITTLE J. My lord, forget not this,
The tree will bear fresh leaves another spring,—
Another spring shall bring you fresher hopes.

HUNT. Yes, but the tree remembers not its last
Years' leaves, though they lie begging at her feet ;
Another stock, another graft, and other leaves
Shall come, and flattering winds be found
To do them honour,—so blows the world.
Oh ! had my friends been made of snow, such as
Boys build in winter time, hearts of snow,
Eyes of snow, and tongues frozen to their mouth,
They would not have so soon discandied,
So soon have run to water. Oh, what a thaw is this
When friendship melts !
Oh walls, ye frown upon me, and ye trees whose heads
Girt with the honours of a thousand years,
Rich honours I this day have laid in dust,
Yea, e'en the arras gapes, and mourning eyes
Of my forefathers from their dusty frames
Look down upon me in dismay !
But were this all, I would not mind ;
But in my fall, I ruin others too—poor men
Whose all was freighted in my ship, who tied
Themselves to me like bauble-boats, are now
Engulphed in the whirlpool that I made !
Had some one told me this,
That there was one who could
So basely ruin innocent men, mothers
And babes, yea, his own wife, I should have called
Him traitor, wretch ; and now look on this wretch !

Enter MARIAN.

MARIAN. Why is my lord so sad ? wherefore so soon,
So suddenly arose you from the board ?

What thirsty grief drinks up the roseate colour
Of thy cheeks? why art thou silent?

Answer me, my love.

HUNT. There is a plot 'gainst us, hatched and conceived
Under our roof, a serpent's egg which we have ta'en
And nestled in our best affections,
And from it now doth crawl all slimy things.
Thou art simple in this wicked world of ours,
And I like not to read to you its text.

MARIAN. Tell me, my lord, what plot this may be—we
have our friends and relatives to help us. Ho there!
Prince John. (*calls*)

HUNT. Stop, those whom you call, they are our foes,
Our relatives, our enemies! This unkind world,
To tamper so with our affections,
To store the poison in the sweetest flower,
And villainy itself 'neath beauty's mask!

MARIAN. My lord, tell me the worst—I am prepared
Say it in a word.

HUNT. No words contain it,
'Twill take our life-times to repeat it all.

MARIAN. The misery of suspense is sharper than
The grief itself, and shadows being gazed on
Do grow more hideous than their causes are.
My lord, do speak, I beg!

HUNT. Then list to me.
This morn thou wert a maid, and now a bride,
Anon a widow; the orange-flower with the words
I speak, doth shrivel to a cypress wreath:
And thy marriage dower to sighs and tears!
We are both ruined, as far as honours, noblesse,
The place and rank of fashion are concerned,
But to no further—they touch not the mind.
I must this night away into the woods,
For I am proclaimed an outlaw through the land.

MARIAN. Did I not promise thee a wife's fealty,
To love, to cherish, to obey till death?
Were not two streams of life joined into one?
Were not two voices set to the same note?
Was not one seed of love sown in two hearts,
Which parted once, the weaker half must die?

And now to me this trial is joy, this pain
Is pleasure, else had my love
Remained unproved ; now I will follow thee,
For a wife's love can never outlawed be.

HUNT. It was not for myself I cared, but you—
That you so young and fair should be exposed
To the world's rude shocks ; and I do fear that perils,
Hardships and storms await us, for they say
We may tell each season by its signs,
And that the approach of frosts are ushered in
With shifting streamers on the northern heavens,
Brilliant but fleeting ; so have men mocked at us,
Like phantom shadows with outstretched arms,
Upon our little heaven of hope, flitting across
Each other's track, and then are blown away,
Dissolved into thin air of which they are,
Leaving us nought but winter and its frosts.

MARIAN. But know you not that He who sends those
frosts

And those same airy forms, that He doth set
The woods a-fire with berries and with hips,
To feed the birds ; that the poor mole e'en escapes
Not His o'erlooking, much less shall we ;
Calamities are sent for good and not for harm ;
And oft upon a summer's day, I've seen
A violet bed besprink't with white and blue
Which scarcely breathed an echo of perfume,
But when rough Boreas passed o'er them
Shaking their gentle heads, the fragrance woke
And filled the air,—so pleasure follows pain,
And in this world to lose is oft to gain.

HUNT. I like thy counsel ; it clears these clouds,
And sunny beams of thy bright eyes dry up.
Grief's mists ;
For Fortune to us shall turn alchemist,
The plumpy moss become as velvet pile,
The wild crab all its juices change,
The logs which 'stead of tables serve, rare in
Our eyes, as though which grow with richer grain,
And from our earthenware I warrant we
Shall eat with appetites as keen as they

Who feed from massy services of gold ;
And in our merry moods you shall be Queen
O' the Fairies, and I the fat King Oberon,
And we will dance upon the sward with song,
And drain the merry wassail bowl of ale,—
Like a huge frothy sea within a cave
At turn of tide—and we'll forget there's a world
Beyond the forest, where men curse and pray
By turns, and cozen (could they) God each day.

LITTLE J. Your plate and jewels I will straight pack up,
And toward Nottingham convey them hence ;
Of all your cattle money shall be made,
And we at Mansfield will await your coming,
Where we'll determine which way's best to take.

Exit.

HUNT. Thou know'st the old fish-pond in the park ?

MARIAN. Oh, I do know it well ! 'tis where we oft
Have pulled long water-grasses, pimpinels
Which shepherds call their weather-glass,
And scented mill-wort like the down upon
The egret's crest.

HUNT. Below that pond there is
A sluice, whose floor is green with sedge and ooze,
Where the small eel thrives i' the mud, o'er which
A plank is thrown where fishers hang their nets ;
Cross this, and take the footpath through the woods
Until you reach a stile o'ershadowed
By a clump of oaks—there will I wait
For you.

MARIAN. Though Dian doth not lovers aid,
This night her moon shall be my nuptial torch.
If you had bade me meet you by the sea,
On deserts wild, or on some lonely moor,
Nought would have hindered ; but this doth seem
So like some trysting spot of old, when love
Betwixt us two was yet unripe, that I
Mistake it for the blind boy's roguish trick,
And not some hazardous escape on which
Our life depends.

HUNT. Only beware of Elinor the Queen, she'll lime
every twig of her invention to take you ;—trust not her

word, believe not her graceful excuses, for her's is the sun-smile of a tempestuous day.

Re-enter LITTLE JOHN.

LITTLE J. Bestir you quick! not a minute's to be lost—the King's shrieve stands at the door, and your safety depends on some bold stroke. Much stands chafering with him, but he won't be put off the trail long.

HUNT. Before I go I'll beard these trencher-relatives,—these plate-and-platter cousins.

MARIAN. My lord, don't needlessly expose yourself, but escape—they may lay hands upon you.

HUNT. Not whilst there are wine and viands within. But stop, go tell them I do but act a play for their amusement, and mine's the tragic part—tell them 'tis such a one in which the audience are the players, deeds are catchwords, and the heart and passions prompters.

Exit MARIAN.

LITTLE J. Thy lady doth excite my admiration.
I know that tender maids, Nature's pet slips,
Nursed in the garden grounds of luxury,
Do feel life's storms and sleet more piercingly
Than we poor folk, who growing on the cliffs
And byeways of humanity, spring up we scarce know how.

Exit LITTLE JOHN.

Enter QUEEN ELINOR, MARIAN, LORD FITZWATER, LORD SENTLOE, SIR GILBERT BROUGHTON, SIR HUGH LACY, WARMAN, ATTENDANTS, &c.

QUEEN. The mistress of your love, fair Marian,
Tells us your sudden rising from the banquet
Was but a humour, which you mean to purge
In some high tragic lines.

HUNT. Sit down, fair Queen (the Prologue's part is played),
Sit down, Prince John, Lord Sentloe too,
Sir Gilbert Broughton, yea, and Warman sit,
Though you my steward be—all of you sit,
For pity sit, it must, it must be so,
For some of you will sit when I shall stand, I know. (*sits them down*)

You who with ruthless eyes my sorrows see,
And come prepared to feast on my sad fall,
To whom the strongest current of your prayers
Was my undoing,
Who, while the sunshine of my greatness 'dured,
Revelled out all my day in your delights,
And now you see the black night of my woe
O'ershade the beauty of my good.

(*turning to his Retainers*) You who have had your daily
bounty at my hand,

Clothed, fed at my expense, what none of you
Had courage, love, respect enough—why talk
Of love, what not the decency to tell me
That my father's house was set upon by men,
Compared with whom the robber is most brave ;
Have I not ever been most kind, forgiven you
Your debts, released you often from the grip
Of Sorrow's vice, gave you counsel, sat with
You all at chapel shrive ; I was no Norman lord
To call you Saxon churls, to taunt you with
Defeat, for we had shared one common lot ;
Ingratitude from kindnesses doth flow,
And that's why man doth hate his Maker so.

WARMAN. Your honour thinks not ill of me I hope.

HUNT. Judas speak first ; with ' Master is it I ?'
No, my false steward, your accounts are true,
And your account with heaven is true, if there
Be rope and gallows for such villainy ;
And thou, Prince John, whose countenance and soul,
Are ever at one ceaseless war, in which
Thy soul is conqueror ; I owe you thanks,
Have you not treated me as brother,
Loved me as one, whose right you do usurp,
To whom your oath was broke, as soon as e'er
He left these English shores ; and you fair Queen
I owe you many thanks, for by this outlawry,
My bride will so escape your poisoned cup,
And you ye catchpoll grooms, no further harm
I wish, than that ye may enjoy the master of
Your choice ; I know the self-imposed yoke
Is hardest far to bear. Out of my house

For mine it is, fell traitors as you be.—
They run away, so ends the tragedy.

They all rush away except LORD FITZWATER *and*
MARIAN.

MARIAN. What must I balance love against affection,
Oh, which of you will lighten one of these two scales,
For now they are both equal; before I saw you
Father, love did outweigh affection,
But now you have thrown in grey locks and tears.

HUNT. I'll speak first; stay with *him*, you will cheer
His days, the fairest sun to melt the frost;
For we shall have hard frosts, when charity,
Good-dealing, faithful friendship, honesty,
Are chill cold, dead with cold.

MARIAN. You love me less,
I fear: I cannot let *you* go.

FITZ. Go with him,
Comfort *him*, you may sooth his trials,
But never mine, they are past remedy;
I am old, and he is young, and there is chance.

MARIAN. I'll not consent, it would be wicked:
For a child to leave her father thus,
What curse would heaven not rain upon its head.

HUNT. This frost to me shall be but genial as
The winter, brace up my nerves to higher deeds,
Fine off impurities of blood and soul;
But oh! 'twill freeze his breath of life.

MARIAN. What choice is this?
Lucretia, doubting 'twixt life and death,
Achilles, 'twixt a golden ease and the
Renown of fame, the Roman general
Whether he his unkind country should defend,—
All these they could not choose but well;
(*pointing to the* EARL) If I leave you, the world will have
to say
To disaffected wives, act the false truant
Marian, she who was wedded to the Earl,
And played him false. If I leave you, (*pointing to* FITZ-
WATER)
My name will be a legacy to all

Ungrateful children yet unborn ; parents
If you have any doubts, christen your children
Marians, they'll say. Oh ! what a world is this,
Which always construes our best deeds amiss !

FITZ. My child I love you so, that I release
You from all bonds ; let love bear off the palm,
He is not only husband, but your father ;
And as you love your father go with him.

MARIAN. What, would you make me cuckoo in your
nest ?—call me rather bastard—say I am not from your
loins, and then I leave you.

FITZ. Marian, you have obeyed me hitherto,
Suppose I were to die e'en now,
For indeed my life is frail, and you
Still disobedient ; oh ! what grief were yours
To think you had disobeyed my last request.

MARIAN. This then has turned the scale, we do put
faith
In dreams, old gossips' tales, and fortune-tellers ;
Yea, candle-wasters credence gain, and things
As light as air, serve to direct our choice ;
And I'll put faith in this, come we away,
'Tis pain to leave, but more to disobey.

Exeunt.

SCENE V.—*The Outskirts of a Wood, with a Stream—Night.*

Enter MARIAN.

MARIAN. How dark it is, and I am so faint and weary !
What strange noises ! but 'tis perhaps only my fancy.

(sings) Oh, sweet fairies, help me !
Let the glow-worm light me,—
She is sun and moon to you !
Oh, sweet fairies, right me !

I had thought to have found my way easy enough ; by the
day I know every inch of it—every little flower that grows
here, but now the way seems more intricate than poor
Rosamond's bower.

(sings) Flowers ye this night have sworn
 My senses to perplex;
 Fairies, ye have some conspiracy
 My poor heart to vex.

A storm comes on.

—Hark! I hear footsteps—or is it the stock-dove startled in the fir boughs?—the sounds in the night do so strangely tease the mind. No, no; 'tis the footsteps of the rain treading on the leaves. Hark how the wind is bending those saplings as though 'twould make a road for the storm! Yon moon is peering through the clouds, as if to unfurl her white flag of peace; 'tis in vain, the tempest won't listen to a truce. (*approaching the stream—the wind blows her veil away*) How bright the lightning shows everything!—the flowers sleeping, the falling leaves, the swollen veins of the stream, the muffled birds: 'twill blind the blinking bats and owls—they'll think 'tis the sun fallen in their holes. I did but laugh and sing to fairies just now—'tis like jesting by a death-bed! Hark how the thunder from the lungs of heaven roars! There is but One can save me, and to Him will I pray. (*kneels*) Now will I lay me underneath this bank where the roots of trees are its columns, for I am tired and wet. (*falls asleep under the bank which conceals her*)

Enter HUNTINGDON and LITTLE JOHN.

LITTLE J. I fear she must have lost her way in the storm and darkness, for we have now searched the whole wood through.

HUNT. But what's this comes floating down the stream?

LITTLE J. My lady's 'kerchief and her veil!

HUNT. Oh reason, reason not! for thou wilt reason me To madness of distress! What! my poor wife, Upon this dark and miry way, hath slipped And fallen.

LITTLE J. Perchance she clingeth to some friendly bough. Hark! were those voices as for aid?

HUNT.

No, no!

Look, here the footsteps show, how she led by
 The cozening hand of night—Night who hath been

So oft the joint conspirator with Death,
Hath stepped, as 'twere into a crystal tomb.

LITTLE J. We'll search and not despair; I've heard
it said

Of persons lately drowned,
The light within life's candle may be blown in,
If there be but a spark.

HUNT. No, no, this stream
I'm sure would ne'er give up so rich a prize.
Dear wife, forgive me this, who am the cause of it;
I am a desperate man, the world has now
No charms for me; hopes they have left me, like
The hairs upon an old man's head,
Never to come again; and on me
Fortune has unloosed her pack of hounds,
Grief, penury, despair, and death their names.
First one got on the trail, and raised its cry,
And then another and another, 'till now
The whole are close upon my heels;
Lead me away, the sun is rising pale,
As though Prometheus on this morn again
Had robbed it of its fires; come we must go,
Our foes will be astir.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Interior of the Earl's Castle.*

Enter PRINCE JOHN *and* ATTENDANT.

PRINCE. Is Marian then gone?

ATTEN. By strategy she escaped through the aid of Sir
Hugh Lacy.

PRINCE. Go, scour the country.

Exit ATTENDANT.

—I fear she will have made for the woods with the Earl,
and all chance of finding her is gone.

Enter a MESSENGER from ELY.

MESS. My lord, my Lord of Ely sends for you,
About important business of the state.

PRINCE. Tell the proud Prelate I am not dispos'd,
Nor in estate to come at his command.

Exit MESSENGER.

Enter LORD LACY, and SIR HUGH LACY.

LACY. Hence traitor, as thou art,
If with your flattering tongue you seek to hide
Your traitorous purpose.

SIR HUGH. Conceit your worse,
You know it, that I know the Prior of York,
Corrupted you, Lord Sentloe, Broughton, Warman,
To come to the mock-spouse feast.

LACY. Here is the Prince.

PRINCE. (to SIR HUGH) Now for revenge, draw and
defend thee.

With bitter loss shall you sell off
Fair Marian's escape, and thus I pay it. (*stabs him*)

LACY. Sure payment, Prince.

Enter ELY, CHESTER, LORDS, &c.

ELY. What murderous hand hath killed this gentle
knight,
Good Sir Hugh Lacy, steward of my lands?

PRINCE. Ely, he died by princely hands.

ELY. Unprincely deed! Death asketh death you know.
Arrest him, officers.

PRINCE. Who'll be my bail?

LACY. I!

CHES. And I!

ELY. You are confederates.

Enter a MESSENGER with letters.

PRINCE. But here are letters from his Majesty,
Sent out from Joppa in the Holy Land,
To you, to these, to me, to all the state,
Containing a repeal of that large grant,

And free authority to take the Seal
Into the hands of three Lords Temporal.
(to ELY) And you shall yield it, or as Sir Hugh lies
Desertfully for pride and treason stabbed,
You shall lie too. Those that intend as I,
Rally round this steel ensign; (*lifts up his sword*) more it fits
To make apparent sins of mighty men,
And on their persons sharply to correct
A little fault, a very small defect,
Than on the poor to practise chastisement:
For if the mighty fall, fear then besets
The proud hearts of the mighty ones, his mates.

OFFICERS *arrest ELY and take him away.*

—Now is this comet shot into the sea,
Or lies like slime upon the sullen earth.

SALIS. I know not what to think herein, my lord.

FITZ. Ely is not the man I took him for;
I am afraid we shall have worse than he.

PRINCE. Why, whence doth spring your fear?

FITZ. Him for his pride we justly have suppressed;
But prouder climbers are about to rise.

SALIS. Name them!—know you any such?

PRINCE. Fitzwater means not anything, I know;
For if he did his tongue would tell his heart.

FITZ. An argument of my free heart, my lord,
That lets the world be witness of my thoughts.
When I was taught, true dealing kept the school;
Deeds were sworn partners with protesting words;
We said and did; these say and never mean.
This upstart protestation of no proof,
This “I beseech you, Sir, accept my love;
Command me, use me!”

A sudden puff of wind, a lightning flash,
A bubble on a stream doth longer 'dure
Than doth the purpose of their promise!
A shame upon this peevish, apish age,
These crouching, hypocrite, dissembling times,
Oh, may God rid the patrons of these crimes
Out of this land! I have an inward fear,
This ill well-seeming sin will be bought dear.

LACY. Well said, old conscience, you keep still one song.

PRINCE. In your contentious humours, noble lords,
Peers, and upholders of the English state,
John silent stood, as one that did await
What sentence ye determined for my life;
But since you are agreed that I shall bear
The weighty burden of this kingdom's state
'Till the return of Richard, our dread King,
I do accept the charge; and thank you all
That think me worthy of so great a place.

ALL. (*but FITZWATER*) We all confirm you Richard's
deputy!

PRINCE. Would you withdraw you for a little space
While I confer with my good Lord Fitzwater?

ALL. Whither you please.

Exeunt all but PRINCE JOHN and FITZWATER.

PRINCE. Noble Fitzwater, now we are alone,
What oft I have desired, I will entreat
Touching fair Marian fled with Huntingdon.
Though he's outlawed, thy daughter still is free,
Why through his fault should she in exile be?
She is your comfort, all your age's bliss,
Why should your age so great a comfort miss?

FITZ. I grant, Prince John, my daughter was my joy,
And the fair sun that kept the old winter's frosts
From griping dead the marrow of my bones,
And she is gone, I know not where,
But where she is there is kind Huntingdon.

PRINCE. Living with him she lives in vicious state,
For Huntingdon is excommunicate,
And Marian can never be his wife,
But in a loathed, adulterous beggar's life
Must live; all this, my lord, you may amend,
And win Prince John your ever-during friend.

FITZ. Think you a wife is made by the decree
Of princes? No, higher laws than these do reign;
And though priest never read from holy book,
Or joined their hands, yet they are man and wife
For that, spite all the petty creeds of men.

PRINCE. Reclaim her from the woods, which she abhors,
Being brought up in ease and luxury,

And call her back to our royal court,
Where she shall live a prince's Cynthia,
And John will be her true Endymion.

FITZ. John, I defy thee! by my honour's hope
I will not bear this base indignity!

Take to thy tools! Think'st thou a nobleman
Will be a pandar to his proper child?

For what intend'st thou else, seeing I know
Earl Chepstow's daughter is thy wife?

Come not against my naked wrath; this staff
Is tipped with harm! Ruffian, lie at your ward!

(They fight.)

Re-enter LORDS.

CHES. What means this fight?

SALIS. Lay hands upon him!

PRINCE. What, dare to strike your Prince? Hear this,
old man,

See that you stay not five days in the realm,
For if you do, you die remediless!

FITZ. Speak, lords! do you confirm what he hath said?

CHES. He is our King, and he must be obeyed!

FITZ. Hearken, Prince John, one word alone I'll speak.

PRINCE. I will not hear thee, neither will I stay,
Thou knowest thy time.

Exit PRINCE JOHN.

CHES. Tell us

Whence grew the quarrel 'twixt the Prince and thee?

FITZ. Chester, the devil tempted old Fitzwater
To be a pandar to his only daughter,
And my great heart impatient forced my hand
In my true honour's right to challenge him.
Alas! the while wrong will not be reprov'd!

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*A Thick Forest.*

Enter MARIAN.

MARIAN. What am I to do? I shall have to lie down
again, and let the robins cover me with leaves, I can never
find my way.

The birds, methinks, would pity me, if they
Had ever in the mazy leaves lost and refound
A much-loved mate, and trees leaning their arms
'Gainst one another, if they in Autumn hours,
Were pained to see their leaves drop one by one,
Until a common sorrow held the wood,
Rejoiced again to find them in the spring;
O come, some little bird, and be my guide,
And lead me down through all these leaf-strewn paths,
And I when winter days shall come,
And trees are clad in tattered skirts of snow,
Like ghosts from out the graves of summer hours,
Will in remembrance feed you and your kin,
With crumbs from out my frozen window panes.
Hark ! who is it comes, I hear the cry of horns.

(bugles sound.)

Enter PRINCE JOHN and Hunting Party.

—Fear, like an o'er grown child, is at
My breasts, and bites not sucks.

1st FORESTER. Here is the Queen.

2nd FORESTER. No not the Queen, although in queenly robes.

PRINCE. Why, here's game I didn't think to find to-day,
My precious doe, I swear to thee by thy
Round eyes, and by those dolls that I see there,
Diana did not suit the woods so well as you.

MARIAN. Were I Diana, Sir, thou should'st be
Actæon, and thy hounds should make a meal of you.

1st FORESTER. The lady sheds a tear.

MARIAN. These tears are each a world, and are made up
Not of mere water, but contain within
Their crystal globes, hopes, duties, fears, and loves,
Affection, honour ;—I pray you by all these,
And by these tears that do contain them all,
To let me go.

PRINCE. Why weep, when you should smile ? Do not
a thousand hearts wish to possess, what thou mayest
freely have ?

MARIAN. I know not what I say, for my tongue is

clerk to a Master Soul that is enraged; but this I tell you, I would sooner mate with the poorest churl on earth than pass one night with you.

PRINCE. Grant me only to taste thy lips.

MARIAN. A kiss of thine would raise a blister. Sir, do not touch me

PRINCE. (*to the Foresters*) Then lead her away, she is our prisoner—take her to the castle; I'll not yield my prize for a mere storm of words.

MARIAN. If things are so, then I must yield; and from My prison I'll look out upon the world
As some forlorn and crazy maid;—henceforth
I'll wear me sorrow's robes, and my worst foes
Shall say, They do become her as a bride!
I have a boon to ask.

PRINCE. What is it?

MARIAN. To let me have my orphan maid to wait on me, so that we may be two orphans in the same room, and we may pace up and down, and exchange our merchandise of grief—there'll be relief in this.

PRINCE. Thou shalt have thy request, but go quickly.

Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*The Forest of Sherwood—Deep Winter.*

HUNTINGDON, LITTLE JOHN, MUCH, & FORESTERS *discovered.*

HUNT. It doth feel cold; but e'en in a house if we do change from room to room, we feel it colder than the one we left: therefore needs it not excite surprise, for we have but changed from room to room in this vast world.

LITTLE J. The rabbit burrows are all choked up with snow, and on the duck-pond the fishes are caught in the ice; the redbreast alone did stir, and the snow as it fell on her breast seemed to melt 'midst the feathered flames.

HUNT. It has in sooth been cold to-day, but I
Do brook it better than the coolness of
My friends, and when I see the snow flakes fall,
I gaze till they are magnified by my
Poor eyes to brilliant angels, all in a white
Maze intricate,

Some seeming to ascend to heaven again,
As though they could not rest upon vile ground ;
And as I rambled through the forest world,
I marked me how the ferns were patterned,
And the fir trees ruffed in frills of snow ;
'Mongst others, too, the footsteps of a stag,
Whose grief was written with a crimson print,
But falling flakes did gradual blot it out,—
So brief is grief ! Thus, thus, methought,
Some wounded man may write his sorrowing tale,
But 'tis this crimson grief that is his death ;
So we'll no more. Come, troll a catch ;
To think that men shall have no ills, is as
Absurd to think there'll be no winter,
Nor storms, nor rainy weather in the year.

SONG.

Bear foaming ale to chimney nooks,
Now at this Christmas-tide,
For we have sat, with laugh and chat,
The farmer's fire beside ;
And drank the toast, with good brown roast,
To the maiden by our side.
Bear foaming ale to bell-ringers
Up i' the belfry tower,
For at yule-tide with mates and singers,
We have rung for many an hour ;
But these are gone, and we are alone,
Out in our forest bower.

MUCH. This is the day for me, when dogs can't wag their frozen tails ! Why, Warman's red face wouldn't warm me to-day : maids will swear the frost makes good starch for their linen. Come, pass the bowl—that sha'n't freeze for standing still ! (*drinks*) man's only a philosopher when he is drunk, for then he's sure the world goes round. No, whilst there is venison and good ale I'll never despair !—this liquor turns my life's wheel. I have been miller now four-and-twenty years, and have seen the mealy snow shame the whitest flour till it looked like bran, and once I filled a sack full of snow by mistake,

HUNT. And what ground you it to ?

MUCH. Faith, you can but grind snow to water !

LITTLE J. The fowler now his bird-net makes,
Oaken staffs and lantern takes,
Beats the ivy and the laurel bush
For the sparrow and the thrush ;
Shepherds now do chafe with cold,
With their flocks upon the wold ;
Travellers scarce the way can keep,
And the toll-gate man's asleep ;
Old wives sit at chimney nooks,
Read ghost-stories from old books,
How Greensleeves haunts a house
In the form of rat or mouse ;
But young maids and men are merry,
Underneath the missal-berry.

HUNT. Here it grows above our heads,
With its cluster of white beads ;
But sweet Marian is gone,
Therefore hang'st thou there forlorn !
But I love thee for her sake,
And this branch I'll break,—
Not as Druid seer would do,
Cutting thee with gold knife through, (*breaks a branch*)
But with pure and holy thought,
Love and worship both enwrought,
This little sprig I'll take,
And wear it for her sake.

LITTLE J. What say you, shall I read our forest laws,
As all our foresters are here ?

FORESTERS. (*who gather round*) Agreed, agreed.

LITTLE J. " First, no man must presume to call our
master

By name of Earl, Lord, Baron, Knight, or Squire ;
But simply by the name of Robin Hood."

HUNT. Say, yeomen, to this order will ye yield ?

FORESTERS. We yield to serve our master, Robin Hood.

ROBIN. From henceforth let me be one of yourselves,
A brother amongst brothers, for out here
We are all equals ; flower with flower
Vies not for its own glory, but a higher,

Birds with birds are not contentious of their rank,
The blue jay and sparrow brown are both
Alike with Him who made them; so are men.

FORESTERS. Then hail to Robin Hood!

LITTLE J. "No passenger
Shall ye let pass till he with Robin feast."

FORESTERS. An order which we gladly will observe.

LITTLE J. "Thirdly, you never shall the poor man wrong,
Nor spare a priest, a usurer or a clerk.
Lastly, you shall defend with all your power,
Maids, widows, orphans and distressed men."

FORESTERS. All these we vow to keep as we are men.

ROBIN. Then wend we to the greenwood merrily,
And let the light roes bootless from us run.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—*Bedchamber in the Castle Tower where Marian
is imprisoned.*

MARIAN and FLORENCE discovered.

SONG—MARIAN.

Where do the shadows go to
When the summer sun comes out,
And where go all our echoes
Of laughter and of shout?
Has the earth some cave to hold them,
Or the water underneath,
Or do they vanish in the air,
Like a vapour or a breath?
And where go all our joys,
Our anguish and our pain?
I know not where, but still I think
That we shall meet again!

FLORENCE. Grieve not so much! the harvest of such tears
Makes bitter bread; the land that bears one crop
Year after year must of itself decay,
And thou long time has borne but blossom of
The rankest melancholy,—come let me dress you,

'Twill serve to change the current of your thought,
Here are your jewels, the present of the Earl. (*going to the
jewel box*)

MARIAN. Jewels do ill become a mind diseased.
And beauty's target, with its red and white,
E'en when unadorned is too conspicuous
A mark for unchaste eyes of Princes.
But Florence I do fear the Earl has played
Me false, or surely he'd have rescued me,
And this my grief is not a pond,
Filled with the mere inpourings of my tears,
But 'tis an ever-flowing brook.

DIRGE.

I've watched the winter from the vales and uplands go,
With its keen north-winds and its dreary fleece of snow,
Have seen the spring come following on apace,
With amber buds and its laburnum's golden lace,
But never comes my love to me—he never comes.

Sometimes a bee that's shipwrecked by the wind,
Wanders up here some sweets to find ;—
A leaf knocks at these glassy doors oft in the morn,
And I mistake its flutterings for some bird forlorn,
But never comes my love to me—he never comes.

The silver-quoited moon peeps in at dark midnight.
And I lie awake to listen to the rustlings of its light,
The swallow with love's crimson spot upon her breast,
Come to these eaves, year after year, to build its nest,
But never comes my love to me—he never comes.

FLOR. I would that you could shift your grief on me.

MARIAN. No, sweet girl, that's not allowed, the God of
heaven

Doth make this life a lathe, whereon to turn us
As he pleases ; our temper and our metal
Are to Him both known, and where the strain
Can easiest be borne ; so we'll wait ;—
But this I've noticed, whether our eyes filled up
With glassy tears, which thereby multiply
Each object, or from the excited brain,

I know not which, but certes we do enlarge
Misfortune, and on the other hand we do
Our joys pare down; a thousand daily pleasures
Pass by unnoticed, one little hurt,
Be it the pricking of a pin, it is for years
Embalmed in our memories.

Who knows whether this trial's for you or me;
You sitting by my bedside, hour after hour,
Reading sweet tales, that I may sleep
Still dreaming that I hear them; put up with all
My touchy humours;

I cross, impatient unto gentle you,
You, still unconscious, chiding me by your
Example; alas, we seldom think
With what a silken lash God whips our sins!

FLOR. Come out upon the balcony; i' the sun,
And I'll read you how a gentle woman
Bound in a castle, wove and unwove
Each day a wondrous web of thread, waiting
Her husband's slow return from Troy; so, lady,
Now undo your daily thoughts at night.
And if against your husband, you've
Imagin'd ought of ill, unshred it all.

MARIAN. Like one in a huge city pent, who feels
The influences of the spring upon his mind,
Knows that the hedges blossom with warm buds,
Though he may see them not; that fields are baized
With living green, though he enjoys them not:
That tender April now insures young plants
From all rough winds, and bids them bloom secure;
So feel I that my husband's love doth bud,
And by and bye will bloom, but not for me.

FLOR. It wants an hour to the setting sun,
And we will read by turns, and when your eyes
Are dim with tears, I will take up the tale,
And you shall do the same for me, till both
Of us do weep together, and the book
Drops down, each little word quite wet.

Exeunt.



SCENE V.—*Sherwood Forest—Robin Hood's Bower.**Enter* ROBIN HOOD.

ROBIN. O better far in this wild wood to dwell,
Than live in gilded pomp and misery,
To be affrighted every time the door doth creak,
A footstep heard ; to dive into each stranger's mind,
And by guess-work pick up stray thoughts,
To nod with feigned courtesies, to make pretence
Of unknown wealth, or else to hoard up gold,
Which some unthrifty heir shall spend ;
That ever mocking fever of the mind,
Insatiate vanity, which worries us,
As doth a devil, and pride that mocks us at
Life's feast, with appetite so nice,
That it must starve. O, these and other ills,
Do drive us to the madhouse and the grave.
Here can I sit and mark some single cloud,
Like pinion from the side of Icarus
Floating aloft, and say that I am free
As it, can feel the breezes cool my brow,
Lift up my hair, can stretch me on the turf,
And think upon the approaching day when I
Must lie there once for all, can pluck a flower,
And yet not rob a fellow man !
Oh ! who would these exchange for life in some
Huge city, where but to live is to inhale
But so much smoke ; to walk, to meet
With misery in ten thousand shapes ;
To learn, is but to gain increase of pain,
To know the world, is to forswear the song
Of birds.

Enter LITTLE JOHN.

LITTLE J. Well met in this ill time.

ROBIN. Why call'st thou it ill time ? I was but reasoning
myself into a belief that the world had gone back to the
golden age ; and so it would have done, had but my Marian
been here. But what concerns you ?

LITTLE J. As I came through the wood last eve, what
time

The fern owl doth chur among the brakes,
Broken at intervals, when gnats do hum,
Who make drowsy all the flowers, and fold
Their azure eyelids into sleep ;
I met a silly fond old woman, and she
With sobs preferred to me her tale, how that
Three yeomen bold, and one of them her son,
Would e'er to-morrow's sun had set, be dead ;
And I did question her for why, and she
With broken sobs, her two hands crossed
Upon her crutch, and head bent downward,
Which ever and anon she raised when words
Did fail, said how that they within this wood
Impelled by hunger keen, had slain some deer,
For which by law they were condemned to death.

ROBIN. We will away and rescue them ; but stop, here comes a palmer—at his side hangs his silver cross, making sweet music to his psalm ; I'll change clothes with him that suspicion be not aroused, and do you change your dress, and meet me with our merry men.

Exit LITTLE JOHN.

Enter a PALMER, *chanting.*

PALMER. Coral insects building in the sea,
Can't control their destiny ;
Comets roaming in a fiery race
Know not why they leave their place ;
Men are builders in the sea,
Working out their destiny, —
Men are comets in a race,
Roaming to their future place.

ROBIN. Good palmer, stop, nor count thy beads to-day,
Take off thy pilgrim's coat, I'll give thee this,
And twenty pieces of broad gold beside.

PALMER. O do not laugh at me, but give me alms,
That I upon my pilgrimage may go in peace,
And I'll an old man's blessing give to you.
What profits you to laugh at me ?
Know you not that youth and beauty must all come

To wrinkles and the chapless cheek,
And the eye's bright lamp burn to a snuffy wick?

ROBIN. I do not jest; here, take the gold, 'twill buy
You sack—give me your clothes anon.

PALMER. They are homespun, coarse in their quality,
But serve to keep the wind and rain away.

ROBIN. (*putting on the Palmer's apparel*) Now I do see
the world puts faith in forms,—

The butterfly is cousin to the moth;
Yet mark, the one attendant on the court
Of noon, is prized by every eye;
The other, flickering in the grey and quiet eve,
'Scapes observation. Poor butterfly,
Prized for thy red and blue, and happy moth
In hoddan grey!

Man's the only coin which current in this world of ours
We pass the forgery as genuine,
Though we know it; in other things the value is
Co-equal with the stuff 'tis made of—an old
And battered shilling buys equally as doth
Its newly-coined and shining brother; nay, oft
The value rises with its scarcity,—
A doit which looks to common eyes base in
Its green and mouldy coat, is laid
In cabinets, for daily use too good;
And flowers we prize not for mere outward show
So much as fragrance and their rarity;
But man takes all his worth from form,
Outward appearance, and his setting off.

PALMER. And who are you that in this greenwood's shade
Doth moralise?—may I be bold to ask?

ROBIN. One who has seen and felt the world, and now
Doth rail against it; one who has known the fires
That always ought to blaze on friendship's hearth
Burn out—nay, not burn out, but were extinguished
By those whose duty 'twas to feed them.

PALMER. Alas, Sir! you do wrong yourself to think
These greenwood walls are proof against the world
And all its ills, when you did enter them
Along with you did enter a troop of fiends,
Who do torment the mind in solitude,

Much more than in life's active bustle ;
This is as old man's tale, one who must lay
Him shortly i' the grave, his second cradle,
Therefore ponder upon it ; farewell, kind Sir.

Exit PALMER.

ROBIN. 'Tis true, the mind is as a poor frail king
O'er rebellious subjects, who while they have
Their cue and way, are e'en not then appeased ;
Go where he will he cannot fly from them,
And though deposed he still must be their king ;
And he at times when under force, such deeds
Commits, that sobered he would turn his gorge
At the bare recital.
And I have learnt that passions dodge our steps
Through greenwood glades, and lusts do challenge us
Under the sacred trees ;—'tis we ourselves !
And I, out in this wood, upon whose shores
The flood-tide of humanity ne'er flow'd
Have duties high as any king or priest,
For life unto us all is but a school
To higher life, and all must live by rule.

Exit.

Enter MUCH and a COUNTRY CLOWN.

MUCH. So the forest was always your home ?

CLOWN. A poor man I have lived in it, till my hair is silver'd.

MUCH. Then your hair will soon go, like the rest of your silver.

CLOWN. I know nothing beyond my home. They say the sun rises in the East Indies when it sets o'er this wood ; may be I shouldn't know night from day there. But in what respects like you this life ?

MUCH. That we have no taxes to pay, no doors to shut—but there is one thing frightens me.

CLOWN. And marry what's that ?

MUCH. I often see posted up, that " All trespassers in these woods will be prosecuted according to law, and all dogs shot ;" and as often as I read that, I feel an arrow sticking in me.

CLOWN. That doesn't signify to me in the least.

MUCH. Pr'ythee why not?

CLOWN. Because I can't read.

MUCH. Now, fool, tell me this—what's the difference between being persecuted and being prosecuted?

CLOWN. Marry, fool, I don't know.

MUCH. Why, it only depends on the spelling, fool.

CLOWN. If that's all, then, why ask me, since you knew I couldn't read?

MUCH. And it is on this wise—they prosecute men, but they only shoot dogs, and for that reason I'd rather be a dog.

CLOWN. I don't understand why,

MUCH. Because they may shoot at you—and miss, but if they prosecute you they never do miss; argal, a dog's life is preferable to a man's life.

CLOWN. And marry, there's many a fine lady of the same way of thinking, for she'll diet her lap-dog, and let a poor man starve; argal, with her a dog's life is preferable to a man's life; but fool how amuse you yourself out here; it must be different life to in town.

MUCH. No, faith, much about the same, 'tis pleasant to read the epitaphs there and here also, and lying thrives equally in both.

CLOWN. Out upon reading, I've lost half the pleasure in the world because I can't read; but how does your master like this life?

MUCH. Well. He swears each cog and wheel in life's mill are equal.

CLOWN. And how does he fare on homely diet?

MUCH. Call you venison homely diet.

CLOWN. How likes he earthenware to eat off?

MUCH. He asks, why treat dead oxen and sheep so well? why put a sheep's leg on a silver plate, and an ox's tail which has dragged on the dirt in a silver tureen?

CLOWN. Thy master is indeed a philosopher, but we must be going.

Exeunt.

SCENE VI.—*Nottingham Castle—The Gallows prepared for an execution.*

Enter FRIAR TUCK, WARMAN, *and a Procession with the Prisoners.*

TUCK. (*partly aside*) I must tell them this scaffold is the 'vantage ground of life; forgive their sins, wash them out with a little water, seal their passports to heaven with wafer cakes. And men are fooled by this, it serves them right, much good may the arithmetic of beads do them, but I wish a reprieve might come, 'twould be of more use.

Enter LITTLE JOHN, MUCH, *and others.*

LITTLE J. Heard'st thou the Friar's speech, wishing for reprieve.

MUCH. A good fellow, he's as full of capon and canary as a nurse's head is full of old rhymes and saws.

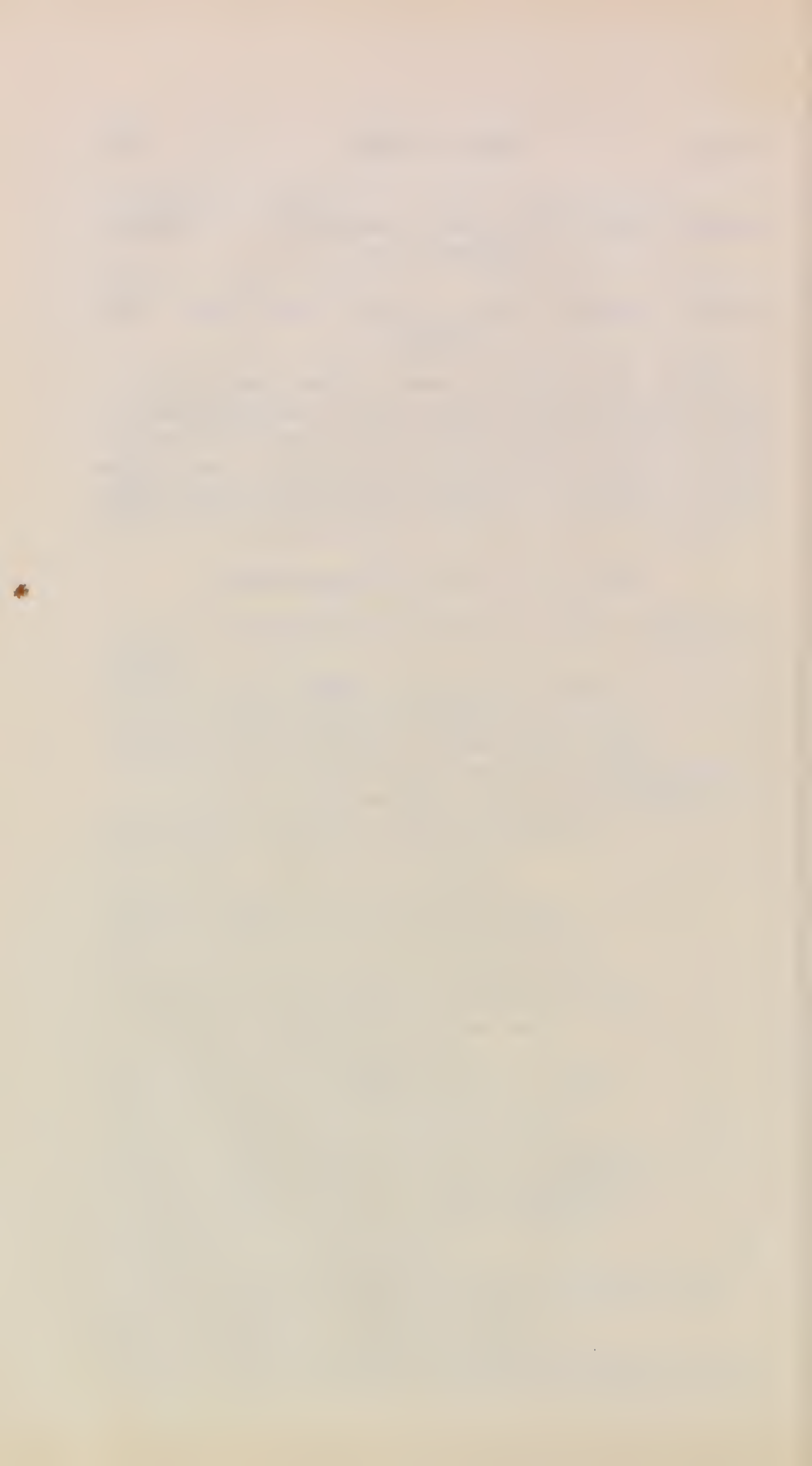
WARMAN. Master Friar, be brief delay no time.

WILL SCARLET. (*pointing to one of his fellow prisoners*)

One mother had we both, and both our fathers
To thee and to thy father were kind friends;
And you and I Warman, went together
To the same school, and on holidays
Together rambled out by holt and stream,
Sat both of us beneath the tree's green eaves,
Which overhung the crystal-dimpled Trent,
And talked of coming days, and should one of us
By skill or circumstance rise in the world,
He should the other help, so we
Did promise not with oaths, but with a boy's
Fervent simplicity; Oh! think of this!
And here we stand accuser 'gains't accused,
School-boy against school-boy, for still methinks
We are at school; yes, call it school, and that
We do but jest at some mock trial, and I'm
No prisoner, nor you my judge.

TUCK. Good fellows here you see all kindness ends;
You must consider of your many sins,
This day in death your happiness begins.

MUCH. If it be happiness, bear them company yourself.



Enter RALPH.

RALPH. Sir, it hath thus happened the carnifex, riding on an ill curtal ! hath stumbled, and now lies with a broken thigh, and sending you tidings of his misfortune, saith you yourself must be his deputy.

WARMAN. Ill luck, but sirrah you shall serve the turn.

RALPH. How now, Ralph will never be nominated by the scandalous vociferation of a hangman.

I was ne'er a hangman in all my life,
Nor yet intend to trade,
And he be curst who ever first,
A hangman of us made.

Enter ROBIN HOOD in the disguise of a Palmer.

ROBIN. Friar, good alms, and many blessings,
Of this day's execution did I hear ;
These villains once did murder my young son,
Revenge I would, but I am old ;
Wherefore, sweet master, for St. Charity,
Since they are bound deliver them to me.

WILL. This old man lies, we ne'er did him such wrong.

ROBIN. I do not lie,—look in my face, know you
Not me, my shadow must have haunted you,
And these white hairs dabbled in blood you shed,
And an old man's cough. (*whispers to them*)

WARMAN. Do Friar just what thou wilt, for they must die.

TUCK. I never heard them touched with blood till now.

WARMAN. Notorious villains ! and they made their brag,
The Earl of Huntingdon would save their lives,
But he is down the wind, as all such shall
That revel, waste, and spend.

WILL. Father we do confess,
And were our arms unbound, we would upheave
Our sinful hands with sorrowing hearts to heaven.

ROBIN. I will unbind you with the sheriff's leave.

WARMAN. Help him, Ralph.

ROBIN *blows on his horn*—FORESTERS *enter*—*They fight*—FRIAR TUCK *as if helping the SHERIFF, knocks down his men.*

WARMAN. It is the outlawed Earl of Huntingdon.
Oh, thou dost mistake, down with him Friar !
Fly Ralph, we die else, let us raise the shire !

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Sherwood Forest—Robin Hood's Bower.*

ROBIN HOOD, MUCH, and FORESTERS *discovered drinking.*

SONG.

Old Care, to-night you'll have to swim,
For we do hold carouse !
'Tis Robin Hood and his merry men,
At the opening o' their house !

And we will drink, my comrades all,
To the doe and to the buck,
And we will drink, in good old ale,
Our merry Chaplain Tuck !

Enter a FORESTER.

FORESTER. They say the Bishop of Hereford is on his road, and he hath sworn to extirpate all outlaws.

MUCH. He is only coming to appoint Friar Much as chaplain to Robin Hood.

ROBIN. Go, fetch us shepherds' dresses—I'll warrant we'll entertain the Bishop. Come, don't let it stop our mirth.

And here's to our arrows long,
And here's to our bow :
For what may come to-morrow,
Oh ! who of us shall know !



Enter FORESTER.

FORESTER. Here are the dresses, but you must be quick, for the Bishop is hard by.

ROBIN. Do some of you stay with me, and the rest conceal themselves near, and when my horn blows come all of you.

Exeunt some of the FORESTERS.

Enter the BISHOP OF HEREFORD and TRAIN.

HEREFORD. And what vagabonds are you, that make merry with the King's deer? every one of you shall be hung.

ROBIN. We are but simple shepherds of the place,
Who, underneath the tree's green tents watching
Our flocks, beguile the leaden-footed hours
With song and dance. This is high day
In shepherd's calendar, for years ago
Down in Sicilian vales, as poets sing,
Once our great master Pan did Ceres o'ertake
Sleeping beneath a vine, the shadows of whose leaves
Embrowned her face, and the long tendrils hung
Across her brow with natural curls, gently
Laid by her side a goatskin full of milk,
And from the topmost boughs pulled with his crook
The juiciest grapes, and of their amber combs
He robbed the bees, and she awaking from her dreams,
(For she had dreamt I wis of Proserpine
In Pluto's halls) knew who her host had been,
And vowed all shepherds, in what climes so'er,
Should keep this day a festival,—so deign,
My liege, accept our humble cheer.

HEREFORD. You shall go before the King, and expiate your offences with a haltar.

ROBIN. My lord I thought you were one who did teach Kindness, and by your example did enforce Its truth, to take the life of any man, bears with It great responsibility, but innocent men To slay is nowhere written in that book Which you profess to hold so dear.

MUCH. So dear that he keeps it all to himself.

HEREFORD. I tell you again there is no pardon. You shall go before the King.

ROBIN. Pause before you take us, think this, that as you do unto others, so will it be to yourself. How can you expect mercy from God, when you fail to grant justice. (*blows on his horn*)

Enter LITTLE JOHN, FORESTERS, FRIAR TUCK, &c.

MUCH. Here comes our little flock of sheep.

HEREFORD. Oh, pardon me and let me go, had I known 'twas Robin Hood, I'd gone another way.

LITTLE J. Who is this?

MUCH. The famous Bishop, who threatened to take us before the King; but we'll deal easier and spare him that humiliation. A holy man like this, is always fit to die; a happy release to leave a wicked naughty world, where men steal deer and fish, and go where there are no poachers.

HEREFORD. Have mercy and spare my life.

ROBIN. We will reward evil with good; you shall taste our venison, and tell us if it is as good as your own. But you must pay for the entertainment.

HEREFORD. I have no money, I did lend it all on my road to a nobleman.

MUCH. That's very bad, Bishop, know you not that "he who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord?" argal, he who lendeth to the rich giveth to the devil, which no Bishop shall do.

ROBIN. Go search the baggage through.

HEREFORD. No, not to a nobleman, but to a poor young woman.

LITTLE J. (*searching the baggage*) Not all, for here's three hundred pounds in gold.

ROBIN. Do you Friar Tuck, put on the Bishops gown and preach him a sermon on charity.

TUCK. (*robing himself*) With all my heart. You said you had not money Bishop, but had given it to a young woman, and we believe you: this is not money then, and we therefore take no money from you, who had none to give us. In that you gave all your money to a young woman, you did ill; and either your charitable disposition, or your amorous temperament, led you astray; and reflect, oh Bishop, what harm you have done to the young woman and yourself, for whenever she sees you again, she'll expect

a like a sum, which may not be convenient; give, oh Bishop, but with discretion, to the blind, the poor, and the aged, but give no more to young women.

They exeunt taking off the BISHOP.

SCENE II.—*Marian's Chamber in the Tower as before.*

MARIAN *discovered.*

MARIAN. Last night the death's head moth sat like a
broach

Inmovable upon my velvet sleeve,
The death-clock beat behind the grate, and by
Degrees my heart beat with it too, and sleep
Brought no relief, for I did dream of tombs,
And that a string of long red grave-yard worms
Did as a necklace hang about my neck.

Who says that we must lay our bodies i' the ground,
As men hide tainted daggers, to rid them of
Impurities; for my part, when I die, I hope
To lose all recollection of this piece of earth
Which hath endured such pain, such misery;
That there may be no resurrection morn
Unto this clod, but that the soul alone endure.

(*sings*) Crazy Jane hath no more pain,
 Heigho for love!
 Death than Cupid kinder is,
 Heigho for love.

I'll reason thus; that virtue roughly handled
Doth lose no value; a jewel tossed to and fro
By clowns is still a jewel, though it hath lain
In vilest places, so my chastity.
Doth take no harm. But hush! there is a noise!

Enter PRINCE JOHN and JAILOR.

PRINCE. I have made thee, Madam, vows enough. I
swore

By heaven to have thee as my bride, to take you to
My bed; you have rejected offers, vows,
And now it is too late,—
Think not your tears shall melt this heart of mine,

Though they should scald it ;—off with her,
To the chamber in the lowest court.

JAILOR. My arms
Are pinioned to my sides ; her gentle eyes
They are more dreadful than the sharpest sword ;
She looks some angel horrified at sin.

MARIAN. You who have tried, each separate art, to
make
Me partner in thy bankruptcy of joy,
You who would close life's Eden gates on me,
Think not that I am now some way-side tree,
Whose fruit each needy wretch may pluck ;
That when I had repulsed your love, that lust
Could then prevail ; I tell you though I am
Unarmed, weak, womanly and alone,
I have a shield which if it fail, the world must fail ;
A friend whom neither you nor I have seen
But whom we both know well, I dare you then
As I'm a woman, and have woman's thoughts,
And woman's love to lay your hands on me ;
Did you e'er touch a marble bust, a statuette
With care, lest you might injure it's fair form.
And you with less respect can touch this model,
Break its fresh beauty, and defile its form
With deeds unhallowed ! Fie on it ! fie !

PRINCE. (*producing letters*) You reason rashly, Lady,
and anticipate my reasons, here are the proofs to shew you
that your husband has played you false.

MARIAN. He may have played me false and I do fear it,
Or else I should have been rescued long ago ;
If he has played me false I'll still be true,
I think a widow that doth marry, forswears
Her lord deceased, I could not do it, when I
Lay down each night, I'd tremble lest his ghost
Might visit me, and say I was untrue to him,
What then an' if he live ?——

PRINCE. I'll leave you to your chamber still, perhaps
A scantier diet may prevail upon your mind.

MARIAN. Nay, move not, but I pray you list ;
Know you by chance some comrade in your revels,
Whom in your heart you thoroughly despise.

Think that I see you such, with fair outside,
Like wicked thought enshrined in goodly verse,
Oh ! as you loath that man, loath you yourself.
But why come here ?
Is there not many a victim of your guilt,
Whose pale face wanders up and down the streets,
Whilst you are revelling in your cups ; seek you
To join me in that crowd, forgive me for
The thought.

JAILOR. I am your jailor not your pimp.

Exit JAILOR.

MARIAN. But this I tell you Prince,
When evil thoughts shall flash across your mind,
As flash they must upon poor flesh and blood,
Then kneel you down and pray ;
The heart, the fortress of the flesh, is weak
E'en when best defended, but Oh, how weak
When it's betrayed by its own garrison !
Oh Prince, rake out the grosser dust and dross,
Which lets and hinders heaven's free air,
And then thy better qualities shall blase,
But now they are choked ; I'll say no more,
For 'tis the devils policy that we
Sometimes should rail 'gainst sin.

PRINCE. She 'th almost made me good against my will.

Exit.

Enter FLORENCE.

MARIAN. Come Florence, bring your work and sit down
beside me and talk ; why so sorrowful, have you troubles
and so young ?

FLOR. They are but your's, which are reflected on me.

MARIAN. Never mind about mine ; Providence they say
sharpens the instincts of the birds with love in the spring,
and my love sharpens mine, or else I could never have gone
through what I have. But my plan——

FLOR. Tell me what it is mistress ?

MARIAN. That you shall provide me with a suit of shep-
herd's clothes, that I may escape.

FLOR. Most willingly, but on one condition.

MARIAN. And what is that ?

FLOR. That I may go with you.

MARIAN. Oh, Florence! I didn't like to propose it to you, but since you have——

FLOR. Neither father nor mother, was that what you were going to say?

MARIAN. No Florence, not quite, but go on.

FLOR. Hark, there strikes the clock, how slow it strikes, it mourns methinks the death of the hour, which is its parent.

MARIAN. What, is it so late? the time flies apace, and painters do wrong to paint him as an old man, with grey hair and crutches, he rather walks on stilts.

FLOR. Then I'll go, and get you a suit, and we will leave the castle about dark at the change of watch.

MARIAN. I'll pretend to be your brother, Florence.

FLOR. I never had a brother, and it will seem strange, but that I am sure I cannot love a brother more than you. How do people love their brothers I wonder? You shall teach me—the pupil will be an unworthy one, but with such a brother, the lesson will be easy.

Exit FLORENCE.

MARIAN. Yes, and under my man's apparel, I must keep a man's heart; but that, perhaps, is the least difficulty. Men are all so indebted to their tailors; and why should not I be? If some men were to put on women's clothes it would betray their cowardice.

SCENE. III.—*Sherwood Forest.*

Enter ROBIN HOOD, LITTLE JOHN, and FORESTERS.

SONG.—ROBIN HOOD.

Come beneath the greenwood tree,
Good sights here ye all shall see,
Magpie with its thorny nest,
Dipper with white spot on breast,
Sparrow with its five eggs grey,
Linnet, goldfinch, and the jay,
Blackbird who so merry is
With that golden flute of his;
Squirrel, too, with sharp fore-teeth,

Rustling in the leaves beneath,
When the trees their plumage shed,
Like its coat all russet red ;
Honey-bee that buzzeth loud,
Caught within the foxglove's shroud,
You the little prisoner free,
Life be to you, honey-bee !
Both of us the forest roam,
To both of us it our home,
You cull honey from the flowers,
I do cull it from the hours ;
Some day we shall know the why
We were sent here, you and I.
Coneys building in the banks,
Wild deer feeding out in ranks,
On the short grass and the fern,
Booming bittern and the hern,
Sea gull outlawed by the wind
Comes sometimes a home to find,
Pewits with their crest so long,
Nodding as they go along,
Acorns with their cup and ball,
You may catch them as they fall.

CHORUS—Come beneath, &c.

LITTLE J. Wind ye jolly huntsmen all your horns,
Whose shrill sound through the echoing woods shall ring
A sad knell for the timid deer, before
Our feathered shafts bring death's sudden summons.

ROBIN. See you yon herd atween the hawthorn trees,
Half-hid in sorrell-coloured fern ?
The fawn runs to its mother, frightened by
A falling leaf ! Pick from your yellow sheafs
An arrow eared like a stalk of corn.
Now then, take aim !

They shoot.

FORESTERS. They fall ! they fall !

LITTLE J. What stranger is this approaches ?

ROBIN. I neither know nor care ; but stand aside,
And I'll give him entertainment.

FORESTERS *hide themselves.*

Enter ARTHUR-A-BLAND.

ARTHUR. Who are you, my bold fellow, that kills our King's deer? I take you to be one of Robin Hood's men.

ROBIN. Were I Robin Hood himself, what would you do?

ARTHUR. Measure cudgels with him.

ROBIN. Try me first, and if you overcome me, I'll warrant you'll overcome Robin; so down with my bow and arrows; but I hardly like to take advantage of a tradesman.

ARTHUR. Know you my trade is to tan hides: so to it.

ROBIN. We will first measure staffs, mine is a foot longer, no foul play. (*breaks it*) Now to it.

ARTHUR. Come on then.

(*they fight*)

ROBIN. Here's for the first bout.

ARTHUR. Were thy head earth I'd plant an oak tree in it this day.

ROBIN. Thine a ten-acre field of wheat, I'd thrash it all out.

ARTHUR. Again, art thou on fire that thou smokest so?

ROBIN. Let me wipe the sweaty rain that trickles i' the furrows of my face. Now to it. Fortune has never given me such blows as thou, and she plays well with the quarter-staff: what if we stop, 'tis an entertainment for which we receive no fees,

ARTHUR. Wert thou Robin Hood himself, thou could'st not have fought better.

ROBIN. Come leave thy tanner's trade, and dwell with me and my merry men, for thou art only fit company for such: thou art lost in the town, by my troth as I am Robin Hood.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT THE THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Outskirts of Sherwood Forest—Autumn.*

Enter MARIAN *disguised as a shepherd, and* FLORENCE.

FLOR. What shall we call each other if we are asked our names?

MARIAN. Better only Brother and Sister, and our affection won't allow us to be called anything else.

FLOR. That will suit. I am content to go all the world over, if I be but called your sister.

MARIAN. Come along, I don't like your pulling all the waxen hips, robbing the birds.

FLOR. What must you have done with that handful of flowers? You have taken a hiveful of honey from the bees, and so few flowers, but plenty of acorns and hips.

MARIAN. I dare say you are right; but we must get on, there is the Curtal Friar of Fountaines Abbey lives hard by. I have heard my father speak how he once feasted the King on venison, and we'll beg a night's lodging; but we shall have to tease him out of it, plague him sorely, take everything for granted, or we shall be but poorly housed: he's a sad miser,—few taste of his cheer.

FLOR. I'll engage a woman to conquer a man, when all other means have failed.

MARIAN. We shall easily find the place; there is a fountain, whose murmur is so mingled with the breeze, you cannot tell which is which,—a green grass plot in front; but we must play our parts boldly.

FLOR. I warrant we will. Hunger is a bad actress, but a good performer; 'tis all reality with her.

MARIAN. He's fond of a pretty face, too; but we'll show him 'tis a foolish cock who mistakes the chaste moon for the hot sun, and begins a-crowing. We'll lay our plans on the way.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*Interior of Friar Tuck's Hermitage.*FRIAR TUCK *discovered.**Knocking is heard outside.*

TUCK. Who's that disturbing my prayers?

MARIAN. Two wayfarers, hungry and wet.

TUCK. You must go on your road, and God and Saint Julian protect you!

MARIAN. Nay, holy Friar, my poor sister——

TUCK. What! is there a lady? I'll open immediately.
(*opens the door*)*Enter FLORENCE and MARIAN.*

MARIAN. Benighted in the forest, holy Friar, we saw your taper burning.

TUCK. I have been studying deep. But who are you, fair lady, and how came you in the wood?

FLOR. We will tell you that anon, but first give us some food. I'll put away your books; this Latin and Greek—I'd burn them all.

TUCK. Do not lose my place in the breviary.

MARIAN. There, sister, you have thrown down the beads. Come, pick them up. One, two, three,—one for you, and two for me. There, Friar, I have counted your beads for you to-night.

TUCK. (*angry*) 'Tis well our Order prevents us from being married. I have nothing to give you but parched peas and a crystal ewer of water.MARIAN. (*ironically*) You should abstain from the appearance of evil—not even drink water, lest weak brethren might say 'twas the juice of junipers. We can't touch that.

TUCK. Try the peas.

MARIAN. Not till we are Vegetarians. But, holy Friar, are they peas only that have bloomed in your cheeks, and is it water only that has nourished them?

TUCK. Even so.

MARIAN. What monstrous faith you must put in the power of words! The opinion that thy mouth would plant, thy countenance eradicates.

FLOR. Now, holy Friar, I am going to your cupboard ; we won't disturb your meditations.

MARIAN. You pray, whilst I go to the larder.

TUCK. By the mass, don't go there—'tis only books ;—nor there.

FLOR. Nay, go on praying.

TUCK. By all the saints, don't go there—it only holds the pyx and wafer-cakes.

MARIAN. I believe in transubstantiation from henceforth ; holy Friar, for 'tis the bodily presence of a venison pasty.

FLOR. Warden pies and clouted cream ! Have you been praying by mistake for warden pies ?

MARIAN. No, reading about Pharaoh's butler—here are two stoups of wine.

TUCK. These women have knocked down the five-pins of my senses, and I have no one to set them up.

MARIAN. You must be hungry, Friar. When I was at school, Greek and Latin gave me an appetite. I used to cut my name on the desk, and pray for the dinner hour.

TUCK. But who are you, that have overcome me by words who was never conquered by knight-at-arms ?

MARIAN. We tell that not to all strange comers. Say when you are asked, that as you were praying a miracle befell you.

TUCK. And won't you tell me who you are, fair lady ?

FLOR. I am going to form a band of female outlaws in the forest, and perhaps I'll take you to confess us.

MARIAN. 'Twill be no sinecure ; but I see you want a wife ; imagine her, your wife, for the nonce.

FLOR. I'll be your wife ; I shall first burn your books, here goes for the Greek and Latin.

MARIAN. Stop sister, here's a stray leaf, and marry if that be Greek, I can read Greek : a hand-book of fishing, and rightly, for the holy Friar is one of St. Peter's fishermen.

TUCK. By St. Dunstan, you are either both women, or the witch of Paplewick, she who rides the hack devil, and her son Lorel, who put you in the secrets of the house.

MARIAN. Secrets, forsooth !—the very light of the candle betrayed you, it had a jovial winking sort of glare ; and when we entered you did not look at us like a bookworm ;

they stare at you and raise their spectacles, as if you were a bookcase, and would take your arm or your nose down for a book, and they drawl out their words like a boy translating his lesson to a master, slowly and fearfully, which you did not.

TUCK. Well, come, draw round, and I'll fetch more wine, and you shall give me a kiss.

MARIAN. No, holy Friar, kisses are the coin of a scarlet purse, which my sister never parts with; still 'tis the only coin you may pay away, and are no poorer, and it generally brings good interest; but my sister never parts with hers except to me (*kisses her*): you can kiss the cushion, there'll be no danger of falling in love with it.

FLOR. The black horse-hair cushion—imagine it's my lips.

MARIAN. Or the lips of a negress.

TUCK. A plague on women—out on it—what should I do with a wife; and if a wife, a parcel of daughters? This night's experience is enough. My room topsy turvy, can't get a kiss—don't even know the names of my guests. Oh! how women fool and flatter us poor men, and then laugh at us.

MARIAN. We must to bed, but you can't come with us; 'twould be better for you to sleep with a snow image in winter time—

FLOR. (*aside*) What a cold he'd catch!

MARIAN. Than with my pretty sister.

FLOR. I'll rise in the morning and make your breakfast, and then perhaps I may give you a sister kiss.

TUCK. Give me it now, you are so beautiful!

MARIAN. You do wrong, holy Friar, to praise beauty in woman; 'tis like a rich country, and oft provokes invaders, and the possessors are too weak to repel them. For time to come, praise ugliness, not beauty.

TUCK. One kiss!—you look like breathing ivory.

MARIAN. You do wrong again, to use so bad a metaphor. From ivory are made dice; and take care that women prove not as false as dice to you. But I'll tell you how to kiss my sister.

TUCK. How?—tell me quick.

MARIAN. You say that if we pray to the saints, the saints pray to God, which is the same as our praying to God.

TUCK. True, my son, 'tis so enjoined by the holy church.

MARIAN. Well, then, first kiss me, and I'll kiss her, which will be the same as you kissing her.

TUCK. Plague on it all!

FLOR. Then you won't kiss my saint?

TUCK. No.

MARIAN. May you live to repent! But this I'll tell you—never engage with a woman.

FLOR. Or never be engaged to one.

MARIAN. Their plots are not deep, but 'tis more than most can do to fathom them. Come along, Florence.

Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*Woods—Decoy pond and fish preserves, with Fountaines Abbey in the distance.—Moonlight.*

FORESTERS, *with nets, &c., discovered.*

LITTLE J. We will go unto the moat,
With the water-hen and coot;
'Mid the rushes long as arrows,
Build wrens and reed sparrows;
And the dabchick we will hunt,
Sitting in flat-bottom'd punt;
She has built her nest, and lain
Six eggs cover'd with the stain
Of wet grass and fibres green,
That their colour scarce is seen.
Silver eels and gentle roach,
We this night will go and poach;
Mud-colour'd tench that breed
In the holes and under weed;
Perch with prickles on its back;
Millers' thumbs and greedy jack.
Down about the grating we will let
Wicker baskets and the net;

Pull up the sluice-gate high,
Till the old pond is nearly dry ;

*MEN are seen wading in the pond, and dragging
the nets ashore.*

Then take off our boots and wade,
Capturing all the fish are laid
Helpless in the mud, and on the banks
Lay them out in shining ranks.

ROBIN. Yes, this is the old holt, where I
Have wander'd with my father's keepers, in
Warm days, when summer suns have melted down
The gold from off the flowers ; and these alders,
Which the cuckoo haunts ; and yon small stream,
Where the ring-ousel sits upon her nest,
Most patient, the stream wetting her breast.

FORESTERS are heard singing—

Come, outlaws all—come, we will sing
Of the fisherman wet,
And his well-fill'd net,
And the twang of our merry bowstring.

LITTLE J. Be still !—the friars of Fountaines Abbey
will o'erhear you.

1st FORESTER. Ahoy, ahoy ! pull ashore.

2nd FORESTER. Here's a landing-place.

3rd FORESTER. The net's alive with fish.

(Fish are thrown out of the net)

4th FORESTER. Take out the sticks, they'll tear the
mesh.

ROBIN. Look how the moon shines down ; the very
grass
Is silver'd o'er with scales.

*FRIAR TUCK, at the head of a party of MONKS, seen
issuing from the Abbey.*

TUCK. What ho there, poachers !

(They fight)

ROBIN. What ! poacher take poacher ? Friar Tuck take
Robin Hood ?

Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—*The Royal Palace.*

JOHN *crowned*, QUEEN ELINOR, CHESTER, SALISBURY,
LACY, and other LORDS.

Enter LEICESTER, *drum and Ancient.*

PRINCE JOHN. Welcome from war, thrice-noble Earl of
Leicester,

Unto our court; welcome, most valiant Earl.

LEICES. Your court in England, and King Richard gone!
A king in England, and the King from home!
This sight and salutations are so strange,
That what I should, I know not how to speak.

PRINCE. What would you say? Speak boldly, we
entreat.

LEICES. It is not fear, but wonder, bars my speech.
I muse to see a mother and a Queen,
Two peers so great as Salisbury and Chester,
Sit and support proud Usurpation,
And see King Richard's crown worn by Prince John.

QUEEN. He sits as viceroy and as substitute.

LEICES. He must and shall resign when Richard comes.

SALIS. Leicester, he will, without your must or shall.

LEICES. Whether he will or no, he shall resign.

PRINCE. You know your own will, Leicester, but not
mine.

LEICES. Tell me among you, where is reverend Ely,
Left by our dread King as his deputy?

PRINCE. Banish'd he is, as proud usurpers should.

LEICES. Pride then, belike, was enemy to pride.
Where is Fitzwater, that old honour'd lord?

PRINCE. Dishonour'd and exiled as Ely is.

LEICES. Exiled he may be, but dishonour'd never!
And where is Huntington?

CHES. Undone by riot.

PRINCE. Leicester, you question more than doth become
you.

On to the purpose why you come to us.

LEICES. I come to Ely, and to all the State,
Sent by the King, who three times sent before,

To have his ransom brought to Austria.

PRINCE. Thus we make answer :—Richard is a King
In Cyprus, Acon, Acre, and rich Palestine.
To get those kingdoms England lent her men,
And many a million of her substance spent ;
The very entrails of her womb were rent ;
No plough but paid a share, no needy hand,
But from his poor estate of penury,
Unto his voyage offered more than mites,
And more, poor souls ! than they had right to spare.
Yet were they joyful, for still flying news
Came of King Richard's glorious victories,
As filled them all with hope, when he returned,
He would have scattered gold about the streets.

LEICES. Do Princes fight for gold ? Oh leaden thought !
Your father knew, that honour was the aim
Kings level at.

What do you tell of money lent the King,
As if it were extorted from the poor,
When you, the Queen, and all that hear me speak,
Know with what zeal the people gave their goods,
Old wives took silver buckles from their belts,
Young maids the gilt pins that tuck'd up their trains ;
Children their pretty whistles from their necks,
And every man what he did most esteem,
Crying to soldiers, “ wear these gifts of ours.”
This proves that Richard had no need to wrong,
Or force the people, that with willing hearts
Gave more than was desir'd.

PRINCE. You are too hot.

Methinks, if Richard won these victories,
The wealthy kingdoms he hath conquered
May, better than poor England, pay his ransom.
He left this realm, as a young orphan maid,
To Ely the step-father of this state,
That stripped this virgin to her very skin ;
And had not I more careful been than Richard,
England at this hour had not England been.
Therefore, good warlike lord, take this in brief,
We wish him well, but cannot send relief.

LEICES. (*to the QUEEN*) Are you a mother? Were you
England's Queen?

Were Henry, Richard, Geoffery, your sons?
All sons, but Richard, sun of all those sons.
And can you let this little meteor,
This *ignis fatuus*, this same wandering fire,
This goblin of the night, this brand, this spark
Seen through a lanthorn greater than he is?
By heaven, you do not well! by earth, you do not!
Chester nor you, nor you Earl Salisbury!

QUEEN. (*pointing to the standard on which is a bear*)
Were this bear loose, how he would tear our maws!

LEICES. 'Tis well thou hast some fear.
(*to the PRINCE and LORDS*) No, curs! ye have no teeth to
bait this bear!

I will not bid my ensign-bearer wave
My tattered colours in this worthless air,
Which your vile breaths vilely contaminate.
(*to his Ancient*) Bear, thou hast been my ancient-bearer
long,

And borne up Leicester's bear in foreign lands,
Yet now resign these colours to my hands,
For I am full of grief!

John, look upon me! thus did Richard take
The coward Austria's colours in his hand,
And thus he cast them under Acon's walls,
And thus he trod them underneath his feet!
Rich colours, how I wrong ye by this wrong!
But I will right you. Bear, take them again,
We shall have use for them, I hope, ere long.

PRINCE. Dar'st thou attempt thus proudly in our sight?

LEICES. What is 't a subject dares that I dare not?

SALIS. Dare subjects dare, their sovereign being by?

LEICES. I would that my true sovereign were by!

QUEEN. He is.

(*Drums sound*)

PRINCE. What drums are these?

SALIS. Richmond is yonder.

LEICES. The King is not far off.

PRINCE. Now heaven forefend!

Enter RICHMOND.

LEICES. Welcome, dear friend! where is my sovereign?

RICHM. He is come to England,
And will himself to faithless Austria
His ransom bear; but fearing of some injury,
He sent me with this guard to rescue you.

LEICES. I thank his grace. Madam, adieu, adieu!
I'll to your son, and leave your shade with you.

Exeunt RICHMOND and LEICESTER.

PRINCE. Hark how he mocks me, calling me your shade!
We must away to France this instant.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Sherwood Forest, a bower—Autumn.*

MARIAN and FLORENCE discovered.

MARIAN. (*singing*)

Where the bee is honey churning,
And the gorse with gold is burning,
Where our roof with leaves is thatched,
And the stockdove's eggs are hatched,
O come with me.

When the moon with mist is shrouded,
Like round onyx dimly clouded,
And the stags with horny forks,
Lie sleeping 'mong the fern and stalks,
O come with me.

FLOR. (*lies down*) I am going to sleep under this fir.

MARIAN. I to find a path through the wood.

(*sings*) Alack, alas, for lad or lass
That feedeth long on love.

Enter LITTLE JOHN.

LITTLE J. Who utters complaints out in these green-woods? Think you the trees listen to you?—are they not listening to each other, and the hum of birds and bees? Who are you, youth, and what is your employment?

MARIAN. One who hath wandered far and wide in search of a pet lamb, that I have lost.

LITTLE J. Your hand white and delicate, your nails like the pink shells on the sea-shore, but their edges are sadly chipped as after a storm;—were you always so bred?

MARIAN. Not always—I have only taken to the employment lately.

LITTLE J. What know you, my youth?

MARIAN. That a blackbird lays four eggs,—when the sheep bleat, 'tis going to rain,—when the cuckoo sings, and goats dance merrily, and the smoke goes up straight, 'twill be fine.

LITTLE J. What else know you?

MARIAN. That I love the flowers beyond words can express.

LITTLE J. Do you love them all?

MARIAN. Yes, all equally, as a mother her children, not one more than another.

LITTLE J. What else love you?

MARIAN. The running brooks, which seem to me as nature's tears, weeping for all humanity, which are dried for a day or two by the smiles of summer, and then burst out again.

LITTLE J. Did you never love a woman?

MARIAN. No, never, I can safely answer for that; a foolish apprenticeship is love, in which you sign certain bonds to one master Cupid, and he never cancels them; alackaday, they last all this life, and perhaps the next too.

LITTLE J. You talk as if you were serving your love indentures.

MARIAN. No faith, not I; but I had a cousin who was in love, and she used to tell me, that she thought that flowers loved flowers, and I have noted their heads hanging together, and have seen the thistle-down wooing one and

then another, as it went along, and yet I know not what I am saying, I am so confused.

LITTLE J. What else said your cousin?

MARIAN. That the religion of love was very strong, it made you pray, kept you virtuous, inspired you with hope; in short, she said many things of love, I cared not to remember, they did seem foolish to me in my circumstances.

LITTLE J. Did your cousin marry her lover?

MARIAN. She lost him, and to this day wanders about the woods, looking for him, and I do think if she does not find him she will go crazy.

LITTLE J. Why in the woods? no lovers dwell there.

MARIAN. I know not why, but strange feelings haunt her, when Autumn comes. 'Twas Autumn when she was to be married, the time o' the year when the rooks, misled by the length of the days, do pair and mend their nests; poor birds! and find their labour come to nothing. So was her fate, she was mated and her house was made, but the winds blew it down.

LITTLE J. You do shed a tear.

MARIAN. 'Twas but thinking of my cousin. Forgotten love is but a pole stuck in the ground, a dead thing, but 'round it living tendrils twine: I wonder she cares so much for it.

LITTLE J. Why can't she love some one else?

MARIAN. Because love is not a foolish bird, which you can cheat; you cannot take an egg out of its nest, and replace it with a stone or piece of chalk. 'Twould have been well if one could, and have saved my cousin much pain.

LITTLE J. (*sees FLORENCE*) Who is this sleeps here, the brown filbert tassels sweeping o'er her face? she hath slept well, for a fir-cone has fallen into her lap without disturbing her.

MARIAN. My sister; Florence dear, awake.

FLOR. (*awakening*) I feel refreshed now, and have had such sweet dreams, that a stranger came here in a hunting dress, a bugle across his shoulders, and that he took us through the forest quite safe, and I dreamt, but 'twas only a dream, that I fell in love with him and was married.

MARIAN. And you awoke, I suppose, and felt for the wedding-ring on your finger. I don't think you have been

asleep at all, but overheard us, and invented this pretty dream. Here's the stranger with the hunting dress and bugle.

FLOR. (*to* LITTLE JOHN) This dream of mine gives me an undue advantage over you, Sir—I seem to have known you so long.

LITTLE J. 'Tis seldom that I see a fair face like yours in the forest—and these flowers?

MARIAN. They are, Sir, but a few wild things, which I Have put together, part for amusement, And part that I might moralise upon Them thus,—how they grow up in innocence, Listening to the lark's pure song, to whom In turn they'll yield a thousand fragrances, And all for love—I would 'twere so with men!— Or looking at them one by one, I say That they being natives of one forest-town, Like men in this vast world, do not Their fellows know. How can the jessamine So sweet e'er understand the nightshade's gall? It rather thinks all fair as is itself.

FLOR. I'll act my dream again, and ask the same question; perhaps, good stranger, you can provide us with food.

LITTLE J. There is a shaded dell not far from hence,— 'Tis where the summer earliest comes, and where She latest lingers; in the spring 'tis thick With crocuses, as though some unseen hand Had painted o'er the earth—there follow me.

FLOR. Did not my dream tell the truth after all?

MARIAN. You hope it may tell the truth, and get you a husband—don't you, Florence?

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*Robin Hood's Bower.*

FORESTERS *discovered, lying here and there on the grass.*

Enter MARIAN, FLORENCE, and LITTLE JOHN.

MARIAN. What place is this, and whose men are these?

LITTLE J. Robin Hood's merry men, who was once the Earl——

MARIAN. Of Huntingdon, say you? (*partly faints*)

LITTLE J. The same—but why ask so frightened?

FLOR. Because this was he whom our cousin married, but he has forgotten her.

LITTLE J. Forgotten her! the name is ever on
His lips—no tree so sighs for summer winds
As he for Marian!

Dear to him as a prize that ne'er was gained,
So brief was his possession; they were
True lovers.

MARIAN. But he has married another?

LITTLE J. Say your another?—she was a portion of
His life; and if a man do loose a limb,
Can he that limb restore again?

(MARIAN faints)

FLOR. She faints, as one who hears some sudden news,
Or as I've heard men working in the fields,
When some rich legacy was left to them,
Their tools dropp'd from their hands with joy,
And all their blood rush'd from their countenance.

MARIAN. (*recovering*) Oh! now the ruddy treddles of
my heart
Do freely move again.

LITTLE J. I comprehend you not,—poor Marian is
dead.

MARIAN. The dead then speak this day. But where is
Robin? for

Robin I will call him now,—my sweet, sweet bird.

LITTLE J. He hath gone to an archery meeting of the
King's.

MARIAN. Took he no one with him?

LITTLE J. No one.

MARIAN. What if detected? was he well disguised?

LITTLE J. Yes, well.

MARIAN. Go out, search for him, tell him Marian lives,
and I'll bring her.

LITTLE J. I will away, for who brings tidings of Marian,
will be the next loved after her.

Exit.

MARIAN. Oh, Florence, this is deep deep grief; I am
Like a merchant standing on the rocky shore,



Who knows that there has been a gale at sea,
And doubts whether his precious-laden ship
Will come to port, so long behind its due;
And walks and halts as I do now, looking
With fearful eyes, what he shall see.

Enter ROBIN HOOD.

ROBIN. What! who is he that conjures up the dead?

MARIAN. (*embracing him*) It is his voice, his step.
Though on thy face Time with his crowfoot there
Hath trod, thou art unalter'd still.

Robin, these anxious years are not misspent,
Since they do bring this moment's recompense.

ROBIN. And thou to me art sweeter now,
E'en in these shepherd's clothes, than e'er thou wast
In all thy costly robes. Great heavens,
I never did expect to see my wife,
Till the eternal day-spring's morn, and brooks
And seas dried up by heat, should yield
The imprisoned dead; death now will come
Too soon, like morning to a weary man;
And in the residue of life, we shall
Have barely space to tell past griefs, to weep
As we do tell them, and say if they had turned
Out as we wished, 'twould not have been so well;
Men are so blind, the present oft is overcast,
And future days alone interpret past.

FLOR. Here come our friends.

Enter FRIAR TUCK and FORESTERS.

MARIAN. I do seem to know this holy Friar.

TUCK. By ladykin, here are my two plagues again.

ROBIN. This day, Friar, you'll marry me.

TUCK. (*pointing to FLORENCE*) Don't marry her—she'll
tease your life out.

LITTLE J. No, I'll marry her,

FLOR. My dream is true.

ROBIN. Go in, my Marian, and you'll find your bridal
dress still packed as we brought it away.

MARIAN. I'll come with you and assist.

Exeunt FLORENCE and MARIAN.

ROBIN. Make ready for our marriage; go tell the forest shepherds and shepherdesses to come.

LITTLE J. They have heard the news, and are arrived.

Enter SHEPHERDS and SHEPHERDESSES.

SONG.

Welcome to our forest green,
We will choose her as our queen,
Spring with all her train that waits,
Passing through the new year's gates;
April with her daffodils,
Azure irises by rills;
May whose robes with flowery braid,
Purple lilac overlaid,
Orchards pink with apple bloom
Crimson May and golden broom;
Autumn with her oaten wreath,
Stubble fields and purple heath;
Buttercups whose golden ore,
Winds rub off when summer's o'er,
And the cowslip's freckled rust,
Covering the bee with dust.
These shall join, as most they can,
To please our sweet Queen Marian.

Enter HYMEN, leading MARIAN and FLORENCE.

ROBIN. Here comes my Marian, proceed good Priest.

TUCK. Come then round this tree's green altar, here join I your hands, but I doubt if I am doing right.

MARIAN. My sister will give you the kiss now perhaps.

HYMEN. (*to MARIAN*) Lady, love's bitter grief
Now at last shall find relief;
Venus rose from sea of brine,
Salt tears washed those cheeks of thine,
But the waves at last have fled,
Left a little dimpled bed,
Coral all so white and red.

SHEPHERDESSES advance and present MARIAN with a bow, quiver, &c.

Bow that's made of tough yew wood,
Such as wears our Robin Hood,
Arrow silver-headed, cord all silken-threaded,
Feathers plucked from Venus' dove,
Quiver, pouch, and finger glove.

MARIAN. I thank you for your kindness, and will ever wear it for your sweet sakes.

ROBIN. (*to SHEPHERDS and SHEPHERDESSES*) Fall to your dancing as in boyish days, when the fiddle of the blind clerk squeaked from the corner nook, and in the middle of a dance, gave us a psalm tune, so life's merry music oft is broken in the middle.

Music and dancing—A banquet is brought on.

TUCK. (*eyeing the feast*) This is the best of the wedding.

FLOR. Peas and cold water, remember Friar.

ROBIN. Marian, though we do courtly pleasures want
Yet country sport in Sherwood is not scant,
For arras hangings and rich tapestries,
We have sweet Nature's best embroideries,
For thy steel glass, wherein thou wont'st to look,
Thy crystal eyes gaze in a crystal brook.
At Court a flower or two did deck thy head,
Now with whole chaplets is it garlanded,
For what in wealth we want, we have in flowers,
And what we lose in halls, we find in bowers.

MARIAN. Marian hath all, sweet Robin, having thee!

Enter FITZWATER.

FITZ. Well did he write, and human nature know,
That said this world's felicity was woe!
Whilom Fitzwater, in fair England's court,
Possessed felicity and happy state,
And in his hall blithe Fortune kept his sport,
Which glee the tyrant John did ruiniate.
Fitzwater once had castles, towns, and towers,
Fair gardens, orchards :—
But now nor garden, orchard, town, nor tower,
Only wide walks are left me in the world,
Which these stiff limbs will hardly let me tread,
And when I sleep heaven's glorious canopy,

Me and my mossy couch doth overspread,
With clouds and stars 'till morning's light doth break,
This heaven, thank God, a tyrant cannot take.

MARIAN. What aged man art thou? or by what chance
Cam'st thou thus far into the wayless wood?

FITZ. Widow or wife, or maiden if thou be,
Lend me thy hand; I'm reft of all earth's good,
And desperately am crept into this wood,
To seek the poor man's patron, Robin Hood.

MARIAN. Here's wine to cheer thy heart, drink, good
old man.

There's venison from the deep green verts of Sherwood,
And more dappled than the deer,
Trout from Trent's crystal hive, and amber ale
From vats October-vintaged, the merry Monk's
Confessor, by whose command at night
His tongue shrieves freely.

FITZ. Such kindness smacks of youth;—fair lady, was
My daughter here, she could not kinder be.

MARIAN. Sit down, and if you will, call me your
daughter,

And I'll call you my father.

Why stare I thus? your eye holds me perforce,
I cannot choose but gaze upon your face,
Which vexes my imagination with its form,
As doth some well-known name we would remember
But cannot. Speak once again, that I
May note thy voice, which shall give out some hint
To the right reading of thy face. Art dumb?
My father! (*embraces him*)

FITZ. What! is it so? My dear, dear child!
That blessed name of father; my second
And last christening; for 'tis the same
Great Nature teaches the foundling and
The baby on the mother's knee, to lisp that name.
My days of hope were at their shortest,
Nor shall they lengthen out.

Enter a FORESTER.

FORESTER. To arms! there is a valiant knight assailed
by twenty foes.

ROBIN. Give me my quarter-staff.

Exit.

TUCK. And mine. On, my merry men!

Exit.

Enter another FORESTER.

FORESTER. 'Tis Richard, our King: his brother John hath hired some ruffians to murder him whilst out hunting,—hark at the conflict!

(Fighting is heard)

FITZ. I must away—my blood is hot.

MARIAN. Thou art too old—thy limbs too frail.

FITZ. This day has given me youth once more.

Exit.

MARIAN. I must away to protect my old father.

Exit.

FORESTER. The villains run!

Re-enter KING RICHARD, ROBIN HOOD, MARIAN, FITZ-WATER, FRIAR TUCK, FORESTERS, &c.

KING. Is Warman amongst the killed?

ROBIN. He answered once; when I spoke again, 'twas like knocking at an empty house,—no reply. But welcome, King, to our forest home and feast.

KING. Before I taste food, I restore your lands and titles, unjustly taken from you.

ROBIN. My liege, did I accept your offer,
My independence then were gone;
And independence is as dear to man
As life,—for he who loses it, loses
Life's better part; besides, though I have borne
Adversity, I could not bear with Fortune,
She would o'ercome me with her smiles
And winning anticks, which her sister knows not
How to put on. Here will I in my realms
Draw out comparisons to please myself,
As how the year, grown old and blind, his eye
Being muffled in clouds, the instant that his corse,
Is laid out in its winding sheet of snow,
Comes without ceremony, the new-year
His heir, and scatters with prodigal hands,

The flowers which his father, in his latter days,
 Was so thrifty of; how in these realms of mine
 The brooks grown silent in the presence of
 The sun, as courtiers to a King; how each
 Thing runneth to decay, how as we near
 Life's goal, the shadows darker grow, the hours
 Quicker post, 'till like a child, who has
 Outgrown its toy, we lay our life aside.

KING. And what says your lady?

ROBIN. She shall make answer for herself.

SONG.—MARIAN.

No, no, I'll not go.

I should be a prisoner caged,
 'Gainst the bars of gold enraged,
 Pining like a bird I should,
 For its mates out in the wood;
 Now out here I feast and revel,
 Dian ranks me as her equal,
 She by night and I by day,
 Have each of us our sway.

No, no, I'll not go.

I'll not leave the fairy's ring,
 Mushroom-fenced, and the spring,
 Where the little elfins dwell,
 Down beside the willow dell,
 Nor the morrice, nor the waits,
 Nor the harvest in the aits,
 Nor the white osier wands,
 Lying on Trent's umber sands.

So, so, I'll not go.

KING. Your looks bear testimony to your speech;
 Needs be it so, since true contentment makes
 Real beauty, and you with junketings,
 And Whitsun-pastorals, and side-aching laughs,
 Screen'd by the green shields of the summer leaves
 From Phœbus' beams, do cheat time of his score.

ROBIN. My liege, though we your offer have fused,
 Think not for that our hearts are the less loyal.
 These foresters, these simple shepherds here,

And charcoal-burners of the forest,
Would lay their lives down for their country's cause.

Enter a FORESTER in haste.

KING. What tidings of the foe?

FORESTER. They have fled away ;
But of the Prior of York——

ROBIN. What of the Prior?

FORESTER. The lightning's fire hath fallen on his house,
Consumed his property and barns,
And not a strike of corn reserved from dust ;
No hand could save, and yet ten thousand hands
Labour'd their best, though none for love of him.
Thus and thus they cried——

“ Heaven raineth vengeance down in shape of fire,
Upon this churl, this hoarder-up of corn,
This spoiler of the Earl of Huntingdon ;”
Old wives that scarce could with their crutches creep,
And little babes that newly learn'd to speak——
Men masterless, that through want did weep——
All in one voice, with a confusèd cry,
In execrations banned him,
And then St. Mary's convent are agreed
To elect old Father Jerome, who's 'stalled
Lord Prior in his place.

ROBIN. (*to the KING*) I would entreat you
For those titles, that I may recompense
The Prior with good.

KING. It shall be so.

MARIAN. A husband and a father found ! my thoughts
Have had such holyday, they will not sink
Just yet into life's working-day.

SHEPHERDS and SHEPHERDESSES dance

SONG.

There is an archer keen,
A Cupid Robin of the green,
Whose arrows never miss—they give both pain and bliss !
An outlaw, too, beneath the yew,
This Cupid Robin is.

Hey, jolly Robin! ho, jolly Robin! hey, jolly Robin Hood!
This archer aims e'en at you in this greenwood!

CHORUS—Then come, the canakin clink, clink, clink!
And to this archer drink, drink, drink!
For he is the best of archers bold,
And he with us shall be enrolled!

Human targets are his aim,
Prettiest faces are his game,
Robin his harts may miss—Cupid he hitteth his;
An outlaw, too, beneath the yew,
This Cupid Robin is.
Hey, jolly Robin! ho, jolly Robin! hey, jolly Robin Hood!
This archer aims e'en at you in this greenwood!

CHORUS—Then come, &c.

END OF ACT THE FIFTH.

ARIEL'S SPEECH.

(From an Unpublished Play.)

Liege Queen, thy wish is now complete,
 By me thy messenger ; on breezes fleet
 I scour'd the vineyards, and the hills
 Prep'd into mines and veiny rills ;—
 Puck and Titania did I find,
 Plot-planning a mushroom cold behind,
 Whilst Oberon had gone to look
 For stolen loves beside a brook ;
 Venus and Cupid, on a fir-strewn bank,
 Were sleeping, tired with sport and prank—
 The boy had brought a new-found nest,
 And laid his arrows by to rest ;
 Close to, Silenus on a young ass rode ;
 And on a wine-skin Bacchus strode,
 With belly like a tun, grape-navellèd,
 And vine-leaves shaded all his head ;
 Within a milk-pail were the Fairies laid,
 To plan a trick against some maid ;
 And by the margent of the salt sea wave,
 The Nymphs were bathing in a cave.
 Two little Elves stood on the smithie's floor,
 Watching the sparks that up the chimney roar ;
 And two were peeping in a grey bat's ear ;
 And two rode on a crawling snail in fear,
 Their hands upon his small-tipp'd horns for reins,
 And thus they slowly drove him on with pains.

AUTUMN'S CLOSE.

O Autumn, do not go, though housed the corn,
 And in the yard the stacks are made,
 And though the merry harvest-song is sung
 By every reaper, man and maid ;
 Though in thy hand thy wicker basket swings,
 Emptied of all its golden store ;
 And though thy kirtle, fill'd by summer elves,
 Has not one swathe-cut poppy more ;
 Still, Autumn, do not go.

Pomona holds thy garments' trailing hem,
 Oat-fringed and gold,
 And clasping tight thy waist with both her hands,
 She will not leave her hold :
 Though like a lover at her feet, thou pour'd
 Thy Autumn wealth of sheaves,
 And though till every field was gleanèd clean,
 Thou crownèd her with leaves ;
 Still, Autumn, do not go.

Vertumnus sickle-armed and sad,
 Lies kneeling at thy feet,
 And swears by all the lush and juicy fruits,
 He won't allow thee to retreat.
 He cannot spare those mellow skies,
 With purple-peachèd streaks,
 Which stain the apple with a thousand dyes,
 A blushing sunset in their cheeks :
 He bids thee not to go, though from its form
 Among the sheaves, the hare has gone,
 Though now the rook the beachen nut doth eat,
 For every field is so forlorn,
 And though the reaper now a ploughman turns,
 And reaper lads go back to school,
 And reaping lasses sew demure at home,
 For oat-stalks there are none to pull ;
 Still, Autumn, do not go.

THE SAME.

There is a gentle voice
 In Autumn eves that calls,
 Before the first red-yellow leaf
 From off the oak tree falls :—
 “O honey-bee, make haste and cull
 The honey from the flower-balls,
 Or else you'll starve at winter-tide
 Within your hive-thatched halls !
 O squirrel, too, make haste and gather
 The last nut on the bough,
 For soon there cometh wintry weather,
 And stormy winds enow ;
 And they will shake from tree and brake
 The acorn and the berry,
 So you must now a harvest make,
 In frosts to keep you merry !
 O field-mouse, carry home the grains
 By chance dropped in the furrow,
 For winter's rains may wash the plains
 Of all their crumbs to-morrow :
 And squirrel, bee, and field-mouse all,
 You must not know sad hunger's thrall.”

 THE RAINBOW.

Why is the rainbow broken ?
 Did ask a shepherd boy,
 Is there some mournful token
 Hid in this thing of joy ?

O simple shepherd ! once
 This earth was wed with heaven ;
 A marriage ring, I often think,
 This rainbow then was given.

But long ago the banns were broke
 'Twixt man and wedded wife,
 The rainbow ring was split in twain,
 A symbol of the strife.

But this, my gentle shepherd boy,
 Is but poetic creed :
 Go, take your Bible from its shelf,
 And of this rainbow read.

And you must trust in what perchance
 You may not understand ;
 For 'tis by faith alone you'll reach
 The promised rainbow land.

LOVE.

There is a deep communion
 Between two lovers' souls,
 The voice of love that 'twixt the two
 Ever in silence rolls.

Apart they never are ; they know
 Full well what each one thinks,
 And in the silent dreams of night,
 Unbroken are those links.

And when they meet, 'tis not the words
 A common being utters,
 For in each other's face their looks
 Are love's interpreters.

I think 'tis as a presage sent,
 To men from heaven above,
 To show what little need of words,
 Up in that world of love.

THE LADY AND THE KNIGHT.

Over water, over lea,
 Tirra, lirra, lirra, lee !
 A lady and a knight
 Passed by me out of sight,
 I wis there was some sprite,
 Past the statue's veiled face,
 And the laburnum's tarnished lace
 Went these two ;
 Through hill and through hollow
 That sprite did follow,
 But it passed out of view.

Over water over lea,
 Tirra, lirra, lirra, lee !
 That sprite did shoot
 By the castle's moat,
 An arrow-headed bolt,
 Near the oak tree's root.

Red seals on a letter,
 Your waxen lips must be ;
 Lady, those seals had better
 Unbroken be.
 Tirra, lirra, lirra, lee !

 Lies a knight
 At the oak tree's root,
 The boughs are ringing his knell,
 The wind is long and slow in its swell,
 And hark to the owlet's hoot.

 THE POETRY OF SCIENCE.

I.

There is a castle standeth drear,
 People call it St. Bevere,
 In the holes where light peeps through
 Starlings lay their five eggs blue ;

Long ago the race is dead,
 This old castle tenantèd,
 Noble courtiers, ancient dames
 They live only in their names,
 Mossy-worded in the yard,
 Iron grating for a guard ;
 Dungeons now to dairies turned,
 Where the milk and cream is churned,
 Snowy cheeses on the stair,
 Where were prisoned maidens fair,
 Loopholes now filled up with glass,
 Armèd knights did guard the pass,
 Keeps and ladies' bowers too
 Store-rooms turned, all floored anew ;
 Thus old time doth ring a change,
 On all fairy-like and strange ;
 But to day is heard a sound,
 In the moat and castle round ;
 Men the castle trees do fell,
 And the rooks their own death knell,
 They sit on their nests and wait,
 With the trees one common fate.

* * * * *

Hark ! there something passes by
 St. Bevere and its old gates high,
 On the drawbridge in the night,
 Casting from the fire-box light,
 As the castle glows with flames,
 Shakes the walls and window frames ;
 And the people travelling near,
 Gazing out on St. Bevere,
 Tell old tales of high romaunt,
 Witches that the castle haunt,
 Till they fall again to sleep,
 Dream of bastion and of keep.

Often in the night-time drear,
 Do I walk by St. Bevere,

And I fancy that I see,
 Of mailed knights a company,
 Witches' heads from out old holes,
 Warders, and a troop of souls,
 But they all rush back in fear,
 As the engine passes St. Bevere.

II.

I often think the engine's freight,
 Is not merely human weight,
 To be computed by the load,
 Travelling on the iron road,
 But bringing higher hope and gain,
 To raise sinners up again,
 To help those chains to disenthral,
 Which have bound us since our fall;
 Godlike machinery and powers,
 Working through the busy hours,
 In mines, rivers, and in rooms,
 Presses, and mills, and looms,
 Great labourers, ye for good unite
 With a more than Tian's might!
 Old Prometheus never saw
 Anvil, hammer, adze, or saw,
 Forging creatures such as these,
 Which should plough the briny seas,
 Spite of wind and spite of breeze;
 Nor the Cyclops in their cave
 Ever such a notion have,
 As the yellow fires they lit,
 Streaming to old Ætna's summit,
 That a road should some day be
 Level as the level sea,
 O'er which land-ships should sail
 Under mountain and o'er vale:
 Vulcan down in depths below,
 Where his fiery forges glow,
 He would stare amidst earth's din,

Watching iron looms that spin
 Golden threads of gossamere,
 Silken clues so thin and clear,
 Stare to see the maiden sitting,
 Iron hands beside her knitting,
 She anon the work pulls down,
 By some fairy magic done :
 Cadmus, could he come again,
 Caxton, too, with all his train,
 Faust, and Gutenberg, and those
 Who helped language in her throes
 Types and words to multiply,
 Symbols, and all thoughts thereby,
 They the paper-mill would bless,
 Engine, and the printing-press,
 Marking figures as they roll,
 Giving news from furthest pole,
 How the world each day progrest,
 Toward an everlasting rest.

III.

In her room the grandame sitteth,
 And by the cheery fireside knitteth ;
 In her crutch more juices run,
 Than in this agèd woman :
 She'll tell you, long ago
 How her parents used to go
 To neighbouring towns on market days,
 Stony roads and miry ways,
 'Cross the Norland wold, which now
 Waves with furrows of the plough,
 And the woods which years ago
 Have long been felled leaf and bough,
 How they used to ride apace,
 Sitting sideways, face by face,
 Youth so bold and maid so young,
 Pack-horses together strung ;
 How the miller's waggon broad

Took some wondrous heavy load
 Right upon the northern road,
 Gave upon a winter's night,
 When the road was paved with white,
 Some poor boy a lift to town,
 At his own home set him down ;
 And she sighs these days are gone,
 The highway now is all forlorn,
 Riseth to the window-sill,
 Gazeth toward the water-mill,
 Sees upon the level plain
 Engine, speeding with its train
 Silv'ry smoke, that upward flies
 For a moment, and then dies,
 Red-hot cinders, and the steam,
 Signal, and the hissing scream :
 " O! I've lived beyond my day!
 Younger spirits on the way
 Move this earth ; for my part
 I'd see again the broad-wheeled cart,
 And the horses strung in packs,
 Laden with the dusty sacks."

IV.

Science, youngest Muse of all,
 Reignest on this earthly ball,
 Where wert thou in ages past?
 Chained with clouds and darkness fast,
 That a Newton might forego,
 Or some wondrous Galliléo?
 No, sweet Science, thou hadst birth
 When the sun first dawned on earth,
 For thy pupils they were then
 Birds and insects, and not men,—
 The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,
 Delving down in tunnelled hole,
 Goldfinch who doth build her nest,
 Thistle-down together prest,

Honey-bee that founds its house
Amber-celled, and little mouse
Who hath granaries under ground,
Weather-proof, all-drained, and sound,
These thy secrets long have known,
Which man vainly calls his own.

Finis.

